

THE
CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR.
New Series.

VOL. I.]

AUGUST, 1827.

[No. VIII.]

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

REPLY TO MINIMUS ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOLY TIME.

It was the practice of our ancestors to begin the Sabbath on Saturday evening at sunset. This they did on the ground that the Jews began their Sabbath at the same hour on Friday evening, and that the Christian Sabbath commenced one day later. And although many of their descendants have, in this as in other things, departed from their example, yet the alteration in the commencement of the Sabbath, and consequently in the night observed as holy time, has been defended on other grounds than that the Jews began their Sabbath at midnight. That question, indeed, I conceived to be set at rest. I thought that the Bible had decided it. I thought that the practice of our ancestors had decided it. For with whatever faults they might have been chargeable, whatever might have been the blindness of their zeal, their intolerance, or the repulsive sternness of their religious creed, no one has been fool-hardy enough to deny their vast acquirements on all subjects connected with Biblical science. And trained as they were to habits of patient investigation, and urged on by their love of the truth and the fervour of their religious feelings, it would be surprising

if they had been unable to decide a question of such practical importance. But it seems that they were unable to decide it. And Minimus has now stepped forward to draw aside the veil which has hung over it for almost nineteen hundred years, and to chase away the mists which have darkened the eyes of the fathers of the Christian church. The universal agreement of commentators proves nothing, although it forms a chain of evidence reaching almost back to the commencement of the Christian era; the practice of the Jews since their dispersion proves nothing, although as a nation they are and ever have been, distinguished for the inveterateness of their prejudices against innovation. But what is the testimony brought forward to establish a claim which carries with it such *prima facie* evidence of its improbability? It consists in an assemblage of texts designed to prove that the evening *followed* the day instead of *preceding* it, and that the Jews commenced their civil day at midnight. These assuredly were facts which the Jewish writers must have known,—facts which must have been either directly or indirectly alluded to in the pages of almost every author. Strange then that a mistake so universal should have prevailed when

the means of refutation were so easy! Minimus should have accounted for the almost universal prevalence of this error, should have told us the probable causes which misled the Jews themselves on a subject regarding their own division of time; or he should have shown that the discrepancy supposed to exist between the scripture account and the writings of the Jews themselves did not exist. But as he has found it impossible, on his theory, to reconcile them, it is presumptive proof that that theory is incorrect. And this presumption will be strengthened, nay—it will amount to absolute certainty, upon a critical examination of the subject.

I propose to examine first the Jewish division of time, and then to show how all the texts quoted by Minimus can, on that division, be satisfactorily explained.

1. There were among the Jews three days of different lengths, or commencing at different times. The first was the natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours and reckoned from sunset to sunset. The second, called the artificial day, consisted of the time between sunrise and sunset. The third commenced with the first dawn of light and terminated in the afternoon. Afterwards, for the sake of an equable division of time, the last mentioned day and the artificial day began severally at three and six in the morning, and ended at those hours in the afternoon. The time between the evenings of those days was called *inter duas vespas*. *Goodwin De Paschate*. That the last mentioned day did not commence at midnight is evident from Ex. xii. 29—31, compared with verse 22. For the Israelites were not to go out until the morning (ἕως πρωῆ,) which did not commence until after midnight. The Jews at first divided their night into three watches, but afterwards, imitating the

Romans to whom they had become subject, they divided it into four, each of three hours length.*

2. The Jews commenced their civil day at sunset, reckoning the evening preceding the artificial day as belonging to the natural day.

This appears from the account of the creation given by Moses. Before the creation of light, 'darkness was upon the face of the deep.' And the works of the first day were, the creation of light, its separation from darkness, and the naming of the light and the darkness. The darkness, which he called night, must, therefore, have preceded the day, for it was named *previous* to the evening following the first day. Nor does the attempt of Minimus, to show that the time before sunrise is often called morning, at all lessen the force of this argument. For, according to the Jewish computation of time, as has been already shown, the time between the first dawn of light and sunrise is called morning. The argument is strengthened by the *repeated* mention of the evening first. For if the morning had commenced the day, such a collocation, to say the least of it, would have been awkward and unnatural.†

* Initio noctem secabant in tres vigilias, quarum quæque habebat quatuor horas. Hoc liquet ex Judicum 7th, ubi legitur Gideon ingressus fuisse in hostem media nocte, vigilia secunda. Secunda igitur vigilia erat in media nocte. Quare duae aliae extremæ partes, erant prima et tertia vigilia, quarum una vigilia vespertina, altera matutina vocabatur. Sed postea imitati Romanos, secuerunt noctem in quatuor vigilias: quarum quæque haberet tres horas sicut habemus apud Evangelistas. *Zanchius Tom. III. pages 439, 440.* Prima vocabatur ὀψέ, sero. Secunda μεσονύκτιον, media nox. Tertia ἀλεκτοροφωνία, gallicinium. Quarta πρωῆ, mane. Nescitis quando herus venturus sit, ὀψέ vesperi, ἢ μεσονυκτίς aut media nocte, ἢ ἀλεκτοροφωνίας aut gallicinio, ἢ πρωῆ aut diluculo. (Marc. XIII. 35.) *Goodwin. Lib. III. page 464.*

† Insuper Moses vicissitudinem noctis di-

3. The Sabbath, as other days, commenced at six in the afternoon. But the preparation commenced at three, at which time the preceding day commencing with the dawn, terminated.* It was ushered in by the sound of a trumpet, which also sounded at its going out.† That the Sabbath ended at sunset is evident from the fact, that at the setting of the sun on Sabbath evening the Jews brought their sick to Christ that he might heal them. And the attempt of Minimus to prove that they did not consider the healing of the sick as a violation of the Sabbath, shows only the dilemma to which he is reduced. That they did so consider it may be inferred from Mark iii. 2. 'And they watched him whether he would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him.' And also from their own writers. 'Propter morbum quem medici periculosum habent, Sabbathum profanare licet, licet laboret ægrotus carnis aliqua exteriore parte. Si unus medicus affirmat morbum periculosum esse, alter vero negat, Sabbathum tamen profanatur.'

Having shown, I trust satisfactorily, from profane as well as sacred writers, the true division of Jewish time, I will now examine those of the arguments of Minimus which relate more *immediately* to the Sabbath. The first regards the time of the burial of Christ. "The account of the burial of Christ furnishes evidence that the Sabbath did not begin at sunset." For the evening after which 'Joseph went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus' could not mean the first evening which began at noon (three o'clock?) but the second which began at sunset. His arguments are not conclusive; for, the expression 'when the evening was come (*ὁ ψῆς γενομένης*), may denote the first evening. Scapula thus defines *πρωτὶ*—ΠΡΩΙ, mane, cui oppon. *ὁ ψῆς*, vesperi. It thus appears that *ὁ ψῆς* may denote either the evening of the day commencing at three in the afternoon, or the first watch of the night commencing at six. And the context shows that such *must* be the meaning. 'Because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath.' But according to Josephus as quoted supra, the preparation began at three in the afternoon. And according to Lightfoot the preparation began immediately after the evening sacrifice,* which, as will afterwards be shown, was sacrificed a little before three. It may be urged that the first evening cannot be meant, since Christ died at the commencement of this evening, and he had been a long time (*παλαι*) dead. Our translators render *παλαι* 'any while,' and Hedericus says, *dicatur de brevi tempore*.

The argument founded on Lev. xxiii. 32. "From even to even shall ye celebrate your sabbath,"

* Vespera Sabbati, seu dies precedens, dies preparationis Sabbati appellabatur, Lucae, XXIII. 54, et a pomeridiano sacrificio et doinceps Sabbato se preparare coeperent &c. *Lightfoot Tom. II. page 16.*

Neque cogi ad praestanda vadimonia sabbatis, aut pridie sabbatorum post horam nonam in parasceue. *Flavii Josephi. Antiq. Judaici. Lib. XVI. chap. 10.*

† In omnibus provinciis atque urbibus Israelitarum vespera Sabbathi sextes clangebant.—Primus clangor edebatur in Mincha, tertia parte elapsa, quando sol jam occidebat. Ita quoque Sabbatho exeunte, stellis ortis, cum in finem clangebatur, ut quisque ad opera agenda licentiam acciperent. *Rambam Tract. Sabb. Chap. 5.*

is not invalidated by the objections of Minimus. Because, as has already been shown, the preparation of the sabbath commenced on the evening of the preceding day. And in the verse preceding, it is expressly stated that they were to begin the Sabbath on the evening of the ninth day. Therefore both evenings would be included. There is one other objection to the commencement of the sabbath on the preceding evening, founded upon John xx. 19, and going to prove that the evening *succeeding* the sabbath was kept as holy time. Might not the same reference, with equal justice, be drawn from the same practice of holding religious meetings on the evening *succeeding* the day, which is prevalent now among those who begin the sabbath on the preceding evening?

There remains now to be considered the Passover and those texts which relate to the *general* division of Jewish time. The substance of his argument founded upon the time of the celebration of the passover may be thus briefly stated. 'The children of Israel were commanded to kill the paschal lamb "at the going down of the sun" on the fourteenth day, and to eat it on the same day. But if the day ended at sunset, the paschal lamb could not have been eaten on the fourteenth day. Nor could that day be called with any propriety the first day of unleavened bread.' To this I reply

1. That the passover was celebrated on the evening of the fourteenth day. The lamb was sacrificed between evening and sunset after the daily sacrifice, and eaten in the night. Ex. xii. 8.* Hence

* Tempus quo agnus mactari debuit, erat vespera. Ex. xii. 6. Sive, ut in originali textu, inter duas vespas. *Goodwin de Paschate.* page 545.

Pascha non comeditur nisi nocte, neque comeditur nisi ad mediam usque noctem. *Talmud quoted by Lightfoot.* Tom. I. page 609.

Deut. xvi. 6, refers to this time, mentioning the commencement and the close,—“at evening, at the going down of the sun.” That these two expressions do not refer to the same *point* of time, is not only evident from the parallel passage in Exodus but from the continuation of the sentence,—“at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.” The Israelites went from Egypt in the morning; the expression, therefore, must denote the preparation for their departure, not the precise time at which they left Egypt. But it stands in the same connexion as the other two expressions—“at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.” They cannot, therefore, be interpreted literally as referring to the *same time*, but must denote generally the time of the sacrifice, and the preparation for their departure.

2. That the feast of unleavened bread was eaten on the fifteenth day, which was, therefore, with propriety called the first day of unleavened bread. But the preparation of the feast commenced on the evening preceding the fourteenth day with searching for leavened bread by the light of candles.* This search continued four hours after the rising of the sun, from which time until noon the leavened bread was destroyed.† As the paschal

Quotidianum sacrificium vespertinum mactandum fuisse antequam inciperent mactare pascha. Horas autem sic dividebant: mactabant quotidianum sacrificium hora octava et dimidia. Sed in preparatione paschatis id mactabant hora septima et dimidia, et offerebant hora octava et dimidia. *Lightfoot.* Tom. I. page 730.

* Luce diei decimae quartae investigant fermentum per lucem candelae. Nocte cui dies insequens est dies decimus quartus: atque adi omnes commentatores, et docebunt illi, hoc factum esse ex eunte jam die decimo tertio. *Lightfoot.* Tom. II. page 458.

† Exterminatio seu conflagratio fermenti.

lamb was sacrificed on the evening of the fourteenth day, and as the Jews were forbidden to offer the blood of sacrifice with leavened bread, Ex. xxiii. 18, they consequently abstained from the use of it on the afternoon of the fourteenth day, which might, therefore, not improperly be styled the first day of unleavened bread, although this was not eaten until the fifteenth day.* But the reason given by *Minimus* for calling the fourteenth day the first day of unleavened bread, is very unsatisfactory. For why should that day be called the first day of unleavened bread with any more propriety if it ended at midnight, than if it ended at sunset, if unleavened bread was not eaten until the fifteenth, and if they did *not* abstain from the use of leavened bread on the fourteenth,—a fact of which *Minimus* seems not to be aware? The view of the subject here given presents the only satisfactory explanation of these *seeming* contradictions.

1. Sam. xxx. 17, is another text referred to by *Minimus* to prove that the evening *generally* followed the day, and the last that I shall here notice. "And David smote them from the twilight (*ἀπὸ ἑωσφοῦ* from the morning dawn) even unto the evening of the next day." Which is more probable that the battle lasted thirty six hours, or that it lasted twelve?

Since writing the above I have met with "Horne's Introduction," and have been agreeably surprised at the *exact* coincidence in the results to which we have arrived. This coincidence is a strong confir-

ti, quae facta a quarta ad sextam horam. *Goodwin. page 555.*

* Investigatio fermenti erat nocte diei decimæ quartæ, quamvis comestio fermentati non prohiberatur ante meridiem diei decimæ quartæ. *Rambam.*

Prohibitum est comedere fermentum die decimo quarto a meridie et porro, ab initio horæ septimæ. *Maimonides quoted by Lightfoot. Tom I. page 452.*

mation of their truth. Indeed however agreeable it may be to the feelings, or convenient to the interests of some, or how muchsoever it be fitted to promote a stricter observance of the Sabbath, the change of the evening is absolutely indefensible on the ground that *Minimus* has taken. Nor am I an advocate for accommodating the commencement of the Sabbath to the convenience of the worldly and irreligious. It is true that the "Sabbath was made for man," but this temporizing, accommodating policy has been carried too far. It ought to stand out from other days with a distinctive prominence. But, in the rage for innovation which is sweeping away the land marks of other ages, this too must be conformed to the spirit of an 'improved philosophy.' Our fathers in view of the positive injunctions of God, pleaded not convenience, but obeyed with alacrity and cheerfulness not only the *spirit* but the *letter* of the Law. But we their descendants have found it *inconvenient* to follow their example, and arguments must forthwith be collected to justify our departure from it.

Q. Q.

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW XI. 11.

Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Mat. xi. 11.

This remarkable asseveration of Christ occurs twice in the evangelists; once in Matthew, as quoted, and also in Luke vii. 28. The passages are parallel, and very much the same in both places.

Perhaps no intelligent Christian has pondered the sentence, without sentiments of wonder and trouble—the one, in respect to the question, *what does the Saviour mean?* the other, because no satis-

factory solution has been afforded.

The meaning is the soul of any written instrument. How emphatically is it the soul of inspiration. *Qui haeret in litera, haeret in cortice.* How often do we rest in mere words; and possibly become pugnacious just in proportion to the husky, chafly character of the subject-matter of dispute! *The meaning, the inspired and native sense* of any passage, is that alone which essentially deserves to be denominated *the word of God*. However technical may seem this sentiment, it is practical too—immensely practical in its applicability. Every Christian is just so technical, when, anxious for the pure truth, he meditates and prays to understand *the mind of the Spirit*, in any of the various sentences of scripture which may occupy his thoughts.

“Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” *What means this declaration?* This is the question to be tried. We shall adduce some popular answers (which are professional and authoritative too!) with our reasons for supposing them erroneous: after which, we shall endeavour to make the answer appear.

Many solutions, more or less ingenious, have been furnished—we notice only two; and these because they seem (especially the latter) to have been more respectably adopted and more widely prevalent than others. Both depend upon the meaning respectively given to the phrase *the kingdom of heaven*; and we agree that the meaning of that phrase must (and finally does) determine the meaning of the passage.

1. *Some suppose the phrase to refer to the beatitude of the glorified in heaven, and to mean THE KINGDOM OF GLORY.*

That the phrase, so much in use with the evangelists and through-

out the New Testament, has sometimes this meaning, no one, we presume, will deny. It is therefore unnecessary to prove it. There are at least *four senses* in which the phrase is distinctively used with the sacred writers: namely, that which refers it to the visible church—or to the invisible—or to the new dispensation—or to the estate of glory. To these some add other senses: such as that of the dominion of Providence, that of the visible and invisible church combined, and that of the government or authority of God indifferently. We admit then that such a sense, as that assumed, is not without precedent; and therefore it *may* be adopted here, if sufficient reasons be not advanced in favour of another.

We might argue against this view from its destitution of *positive* evidence, from its ill accord with the scope of the context, and from its intrinsic *inutility* and *plainness*; for, what is the bearing of such a proposition, or what its use—the *least saint in glory is superior to the greatest unglorified and “earthly” one!* To whom is this information, or available “for the use of edifying?” It appears more to savour of the rhapsody of the Koran, or the puerility of the Apocrypha, than of the sober and practical wisdom of the Bible.

In hope of evincing the right meaning, and consequently of superseding all others, we remark,

2. *That many understand by THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN here THE NEW OR GOSPEL DISPENSATION.*

Such a version of the phrase gives substantially the following proposition: *great as is John the Baptist, he is surpassed by, and inferior to, the least of my disciples under the plenary sway of the dispensation soon to be introduced.*

The general reason urged for this view is that Christians, formally such, are so much better informed,

more privileged and comforted in God than were saints of all former ages, the best of them, that those were all inferior to Christians, and inferior to the least of them. The superiority of Christians then depends, according to this, on the superiority of the present dispensation.

Our objection to this view is twofold; first, that it is not the only one that the passage will bear—we are not “shut up” to it; and second, *it is absurd and incredible*. If we were necessarily determined to this—and some seem to have adopted it on no better account—we might cease to argue, and substitute *mere faith* for rational and proper conviction.

It is obvious that the excellencies of John must be recognized, as well as the manifold and manifest imperfections of Christians, especially the weakest and most ignorant; for, this view requires that he should have *not one* inferior, not one who is not “greater than he” among Christians, since the period at which the disciples were first so called at Antioch.

Now, *in what respects* are we to suppose this superiority, if we admit that it exists at all? certainly, not in *all* respects. The Baptist was not *universally* inferior to the “least” Christian that ever was! In respect to personal piety, to general theological knowledge, to humility, to usefulness, and to consistency of character, it is evident, or easily evincible, that John was among the most distinguished of those, of whom, in every age, “the world was not worthy;” in moral courage as a preacher, in the patient endurance of imprisonment and other “persecution” *purely* “for righteousness’ sake,” and in the ultimate honours of martyrdom, there has seldom lived his equal; even his mystic antitype, Elijah, was his inferior: and that, *in these*

respects, he was inferior to every, the meanest of Christian believers,—

“Is tramontane and stumbles all belief.”

We think it unnecessary to institute a minute inquiry, in relation to the scriptural evidence of those particulars, in which we have affirmed the excellence and even the eminence of John the Baptist. When the angel Gabriel announced him to his wonder-struck father, Zacharias, it was in these memorable words, which may be termed his biography by anticipation and in epitome. “And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

But the view we oppose goes further in its absurdity. If “the least” Christian, properly such, is superior to John, so is he also to all the inferiors and equals of John; but John had no superior in times preceding his own: “verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, *there hath not risen a greater* than John the Baptist.” Hence Elijah, Solomon, David, Samuel, Joshua, Moses, Abraham, Noah, Enoch, Abel—none of the worthiest of previous ages presents a superior, or *probably an equal* to John. But that which is superior to any one, must be superior to all the equals of the same; hence every Christian, even “the least,” is superior to John and all “the noble army” of prophets and patriarchs

from the beginning ! Who is prepared for this consequence ?

Let us now for one moment consider the extreme simplicity, the unprofitableness, the ignorance, the various diminishing properties, and the legion of imperfections, confounded with better qualities, in the persons of some, whose genuine piety, in the main, no candid and competent judge could doubt, unless tempted to it for the sake of carrying a point or propping a theory : then say that such an one, and the lowest of such, is greater than John, and greater than all that preceded him !

We have no desire to name the many commentators, some of them of the greatest comparative respectability, who have adopted this miserable view ; and, by dint of careering, glossing, concealing, and evading the strict rules of exegesis, (and this, no doubt, without all deliberate wrong,) have thrown a guise of speciosity and verisimilitude around their own monstrous creation : but, it may well be questioned whether a more untenable, extravagant, and absurd position, on a subject somewhat abstract and very important, ever obtained the sanction of great names, and abused the confidence of small ones. Dr. Campbell, however, deserves reprehension for a license, in which, confounding the office of translator with that of commentator, or rather commixing them, he renders the Greek *ἵνα* by the English future *shall be*, that is “the least in the kingdom of heaven *shall be* greater than he.” Here he assumes the view we oppose, and alters the text to indicate *what should* (and *hitherto never has!*) *come to pass in the gospel dispensation*. Our own translation is faithful to the original, and perfectly correct.

We now proceed to evince what seems *the only genuine and the richly excellent meaning of the passage*. We shall first give the

view, and then attempt its vindication as the only correct one.

John the Baptist is here considered in his official character and relative magnificence alone ; he is viewed as the herald and harbinger of Messiah, a position of grandeur and a station of eminence which he occupies alone—of which he possesses the sublime and envied monopoly, as one “greater than a prophet ;” his personal character, his gifts as a man, his piety as a Christian, his competency as a preacher, are wholly pretermitted and excluded for the time ; while his transcendent, and peculiar, and solitary greatness, as related to Messiah, to prophecy, and to the church in many ages, is alone respected : now, in this view, he might be ENVIED among his brethren, or OVERRATED and even IDOLIZED by them and others ; but, says Christ, TO BE A REAL CHRISTIAN, yea to be “the least” of the whole flock of the Redeemer, to be “the least in the kingdom of heaven,” is nobler, better, greater, and infinitely more to be desired, than to possess all the official and relative magnificence of John, or of any other dignitary that ever figured among men : more excellent than all the collective glory of office and of station in the world.

In support of this view we submit the following considerations :—not aware that the same view is contained in any extant commentary or printed work of whatsoever description.

1. *Its intrinsic truth, importance, and applicableness to Christians and men of all ranks and ages.* That the sentiment is true and salutary, will not, we think, be denied by any Christian, whether he accredits it as the right interpretation of the passage in question or not. To be a Christian—is moral excellence ; is infinite opulence ; is permanent, unfading bliss ; is wisdom, peace, and blessedness ; is assured preservation and infallible

safety ; is participation of " the divine nature," and communion with the ever blessed God, through his Son Jesus Christ ; is certain destination to glory, and present possession of " eternal life ;" is immortality beatified forever !—forever ?—forever ?—forever ?—great God ! what meaneth this ! Thine own glory, and thine alone, is brighter ! Thou alone canst *comprehend* that good unspeakable and unthinkable which is realized to them that love thee !

And what is there for us in creation, conceivably equal, or for a moment to be compared to the infinite blessedness, and infinite magnificence of the Christian ? John might have been officially and relatively all that he was, and illimitably more—and yet, if he had not been a Christian, if he had not been himself " in the kingdom of heaven," he could never doubt in eternity, were it possible he could in time, that the meanest of the genuine worshippers of God was greater, better, happier than he ? " The world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The moral tendency of any interpretation is no mean criterion of its claims. But what is the moral and spiritual tendency of the view we espouse ? Is it not to exalt vital piety, personal religion, against all its most formidable enemies and rivals ? Is it not to make us all think and feel that " a Christian is the highest style of man ?" Is it not to throw the " vain pomp and glory of the world," and even the allied grandeur of the church, into concealment, subserviency and " dim eclipse," behind the surpassing excellence of " the least" of the company

" whom God delights in and in whom he dwells?"

Is it is not *salutary* to ministers of religion ? Suppose them exalted,
VOL. 1.—No. VIII. 31

prosperous, and envied, in all the relations of their awful function—it hints to the ear of conscience, how vapid this without more durable ! to be a Christian, to be the humble ally and similar of the Son of God, to have a *personal* interest in the promises, and a *peaceful* consciousness of " acceptance in the Beloved," how much more excellent in itself and valuable to you than the wealth of Cardinal Woolsey, the canonized fame of Becket, the learning of Erasmus, the splendours of Leo X., or even the better greatness " of John the Baptist"—with nothing more ! Be not dazzled then, be not dizzy with the trance or the fancy of those things which imply no moral excellence, and no exemption from the desolation of " the curse of the law," swollen in its tide with the unequalled freshet of " condemnation" from the gospel—the especial condemnation *possibly* of a self-seeking, worldly-minded, pompous hypocrite in robes of official sanctity !

To *Christians* what does it say ? It says, envy no man ; pine not at your obscurity of sphere ; live in the light of God's countenance and count his favor to be the supreme good. All official greatness in the church is *for the sake* of pious greatness ! is means to an end, scaffolding to a building, and service to sanctify. For the sake of the church all other things are made, upheld and providentially disposed. " For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. Therefore let no man glory in men : for all things are yours ; whether Paul, or Appollos, or Cephas, [or John the Baptist,] or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's."

Again, what would be the condition of the world, or the church.

should the sentiment we advocate universally prevail? Answer: a condition of universal benevolence and salvation—or, in short, millennial blessedness! Ambition, jealousy, Diotrephean annoyance, “the insolence of office,” feuds, fights, and every evil, would disappear, and genuine enduring goodness and enjoyment would overspread the earth! It would stimulate all the action, and “fill the ambition” of men, to be and to appear “great” as Christians. Then moral heroism, the arts and acts of pure philanthropy, the untold sublime of communicative goodness, would bless mankind, and spread the serenity and the fruitage of universal Eden through the world. That were “paradise that knows no forfeiture,” that hides no lurking adversary and contains no interdicted tree!

2. We have one more general consideration to offer in vindication of our view of the passage at the head of this article: it is *the perfect congruity and natural consent of that view with the scope of the whole context.*

We have seen that the phrase *the kingdom of heaven* is the pivot in every view upon which the meaning turns; while the general ambiguity of that phrase has occasioned all our obscurity and mistake. Our view supposes it here to express the state of the Christian, or genuine membership in the church of God; and so to be, in other words, as if he had said, *a genuine worshipper, no matter in what age, is greater than all the official grandeur of John.* Immediately after uttering this weighty sentiment, he adds—and this shows the congruity of the *subsequent* context—“and from the days of John the Baptist until now *the kingdom of heaven* suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.” There can be no doubt of the meaning of the phrase in this verse:—it is as if we should urge

a sinner, in a time of revival, with the consideration, ‘this is the time for you to repent and take *the kingdom of heaven*, or become a Christian.’ Now, if such be its meaning in the twelfth verse, then such is its meaning in the eleventh; or, there is a strange variation of the same phrase in the same continuity of discourse, and in two proximate verses. Besides, there is a natural and practical advance of thought in the twelfth verse, which is suggested by the forceful sentiment in that which precedes it. If all men or any man soberly believed the former, such an one must be proportionately actuated in the way of the latter; if he *thoroughly* believed the sentiment, he would *violently* or vehemently put it in practice.

The context *preceding* from the beginning of the chapter is, we think, entirely in favour of our view. John was at the time confined by Herod Antipas in a prison of Galilee. Jesus seems to have tried his faith in that obscure and painful solitude by apparently *neglecting* to visit him: this, with other trials, was deeply troublous even to this heroic saint. His constancy seems to have forsaken him, while temptations thickened around him; and he even doubted whether or not Jesus was the Messiah! Hence he sends a deputation of two disciples to put the question directly to the Saviour and to bring him a speedy reply. The answer we all know; and those who have *pondered* it, have seen also something of its incomparable excellence. After they had departed, Jesus—who had “increased” as John had “decreased”—“began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, what went ye out into the wilderness to see? *A reed shaken with the wind?*” for *such* he then appeared, in his wavering and weakness as a common man. He then inquires if worldly splendour had attracted them, if “gorgeous apparel and delicate”

elegances had presented the charm? Denying this, he asks, "But what went ye out to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." Then follows the passage, "verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John &c."

The relative and official glory of John is here obviously respected and not his personal saintship and private character. This glory consisted in his relation and proximity, to Messiah, as the herald of his wondrous way; in the actual moral service he was designated to perform, as the instrument of general rectification of manners and the index finger of the hand of God, pointing the inquisitiveness of the nation to their true Messiah; in the conspicuity of prophetic anticipation, (see Is. xl. 3. and Mal. iv. 5. 6.) and of the church's consequent expectancy, for seven hundred years; and in the necessary monopoly of all this peculiar magnificence; for, though as a mere prophet he was one of a numerous class, yet, as "more than a prophet," as the morning star of the dawn of the perfect dispensation, and the harbinger of the rising of "the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings," he stood alone, his prophetic character was as solitary among prophets as the priesthood of Melchisedec was of its own "order" among priests, he had no similar before him, and could have none after him; and if "the Scripture saith not in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy," well might the Saviour administer the grand corrective or

rather *preventive* sentiment that to *be a christian is better than all the exterior glory of Creation!*

There is a case very parallel to this which may serve for a concluding illustration, at once of the consistency and the truth of the important view we have taken. "A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice" (Luke xi. 27.) and pronounced a blessing on his mother, according to the strong national feeling of her Jewish sex. "But he said, yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it:" as if he had said *a Christian, even the least, is more blessed and more to be envied than is my mother, considered as such, with whatever relative glory, in human eyes, that circumstance may invest her.* This sentiment is most appropriate against the dotage at once of Jewish mothers and of Roman christendom. How infatuated has been the veneration of millions, and hundreds of millions of nominal Christians, at the name, and the shrine, and the picture, and the image, of the "blessed virgin!" *To be a Christian*, says Christ, to "hear the word of God and keep it," is incomparably "more blessed." But here he leaves the *personal character and piety* of his mother out of the account; and argues, as in the case of John, only from relative, nominal, recorded greatness: and as in the one case the piety of Mary is indubitable, and her excellency consisted in the fact that she was the disciple as well as the mother of the Messiah; so in the other the piety of John is indubitable and eminent, and his excellency consisted in being *himself in the kingdom of heaven*,—as without this it had still been "good" for him, as really as for Judas, "that he had never been born."

The subject is capable of much practical use and expansion. But we can only add (and how could we repress?) the reflections, that a

real Christian is the character which every one should supremely labour to possess and exemplify in the world,—that a real Christian, when ascertained to be such, ought to be *treated* with the most affectionate consideration and regard,—that all other, and foreign greatness, in the world and the church, is worthier to be *pitied* and *deprecat*ed than *envied* and *pursued* in all the sublunary practice of men,—that the means of grace are *incomparable blessings* to a nation and ought to be cherished and improved to eternal life by all who enjoy them,—and finally, that the gospel ought to be propagated among the nations till the whole world shall become the proper and actual jurisdiction of *the kingdom of heaven*.

PHILODEMUS.

ON THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF
HISTORICAL FAITH.

AMONG the innumerable causes which affect the conduct of men, one which merits serious consideration is *faith*. Much is said of this in the Scriptures. The term is used in a variety of senses, the most important of which are those denominated *historical* and *evangelical*. The latter is saving ; the former is not. But, notwithstanding it constitutes no saving relation to Christ, historical faith is not without powerful effects. Nor is it unimportant that these should be distinctly marked, since there are so many men who have a full persuasion of the truth of the Scriptures, who still, do not *believe to the saving of the soul*. The number is by no means inconsiderable, of those whose understandings are convinced that the Bible is a divine revelation. Their belief in this, is induced upon the mind by the mere force of evidence, independently of any moral relish for the truth, or love of God in the heart. Such being the fact, it will be the object

of this paper to specify and illustrate some of the effects of historical faith.

It is a truth too apparent to require any laboured proof, that what any man seriously and strongly believes, will have some important effect upon his mind and conduct. Why do men toil for wealth, or pleasure, or fame, but from a belief that their exertions will have an important influence towards the acquisition of their object? Destroy this *belief*, and you put an end to their efforts.

Among the effects of the faith of which we are speaking, one is, *great enlargement of the mind*. We mean, that as a consequence of such a belief of what the Bible reveals, the views of men are extended beyond what they would otherwise reach, their ideas and stock of knowledge are increased, the understanding is more vigorous, and the apprehensions of the mind become more impressive and elevated. We will seek an illustration of this, in what the Bible declares of the creation.

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.” We are here taught, that it is by believing what the Scriptures reveal concerning the creation of the world, that we obtain just and impressive ideas of this stupendous work. This truth is rendered the more impressive by the fact, that the wisest of the heathens, after all their efforts to gain knowledge on this subject, remained in extreme ignorance. It has been observed, “It is certain, that none of the ancient philosophers had the smallest idea of its being possible to produce a substance out of nothing, or that even the power of the Deity himself could work without any materials to work upon.” As they were ignorant of what God has revealed concerning this subject, they had no such exal-

ted ideas of the power and majesty of God displayed in the work of creation, as those which even a child may derive from the Scriptures.

The infidel rejects the word of God, and believes the world was eternal, or the result of casualty, and that the Almighty never exerted his power in effecting the wonders of creation which the Bible ascribes to him. But the faith which receives this, and by it "understands, that the worlds were framed by the word of God," looks upon the suns, and stars, and other wonders of creation, and believes the time was, when they all received their existence from the hand of the Almighty. It believes, that as to their existence, their form, their motions, and all their relations, they sprang into being by the Divine Word,—that "God said, Let there be light, and there was light,"—that "He spake and it was done."

In the reception of such truths, and by such contemplation, even the speculative believer has a vast advantage, in point of effect upon his understanding, over him who regards all these truths as visionary. His sober belief of the Bible carries his mind out to a wider range of thought, and impresses it with considerations far more important than those which are felt by the unbeliever.

Should it be said of the infidel, that although he denies the Scriptures, still he may *read* them, and obtain the same ideas, and the same expansive views which those receive who believe the truth: to some extent this is doubtless true. The Bible may suggest to him, many great and noble thoughts. But still, the question is, will his views be the same, that they would be, if he read the history of the creation with a full realizing conviction that he is contemplating solemn and awful realities? Will his thoughts of God be as sublime, or their influ-

ence as decisive in raising his mind to a high and affecting sense of the creating power, the manifold wisdom, and ineffable majesty of the Creator, as they would be in a sober belief of all that the Bible declares on this subject. It is incredible. The more deep and settled the belief of any man is concerning the reality of these things, the more impressive will the subject appear to him. The story of some mighty event which we do not believe cannot produce the same effect upon our feelings, nor awaken the same train of thought, that would result from a full belief of the entire truth of the story. The consequence is obvious. A serious belief of the Bible, will have the effect to impart sublimer views of the power of God, and to impress the mind with deeper reverence towards Him, than could be the case were the Scriptures regarded as a fiction.

To extend our illustration, it may be observed that a settled belief of the Bible leads a man to regard *himself* very differently from what he would if he rejected it. It is characteristic of unbelief to limit its attention to the objects of time. One of its maxims is, "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." But he that credits the testimony of God, regards himself as immortal. Hence he looks upon his prospects, and his relation to futurity in a light vastly more solemn than he could do did he reject the Scriptures. The unbeliever has no such perception of the amazing scenes which the Bible discloses concerning the destiny of the human family, as that which occupies the thoughts, and often thrills the soul of him who believes the word of God. This belief gives an enlargement, and an impression to his thoughts of death and its consequences, altogether peculiar.

We have something farther to offer in this illustration. Let the

Bible be opened, and the character of God as there delineated be carefully considered. Look at his unceasing government of all things, from the numbering of our hairs to the dominion over the principalities of heaven. Look at the stupendous scenes of his providence, from the creation of the world, to the consummation of this earthly system ; at the character, sufferings, and works of Christ ; and at the history of angels, those great and happy spirits that minister before the throne. Survey the " multitude which no man can number " of sinful beings redeemed from the coming wrath. Look at the end of time, at the resurrection of the dead, at the disclosures of the judgment, at the interminable woes of sinking millions, and the ever increasing blessedness of other and unnumbered millions in their everlasting progress in the knowledge, service, and enjoyment of God. Now, in the belief and serious consideration of such things, there is much to multiply the thoughts, to extend the views, to expand, exalt, and fill the mind, immensely beyond the cold and bewildering speculations of unbelief. To the infidel, these are all visionary things. At the best, he sees them only as brilliant imaginations. Of consequence they afford him no solemn and soul-elevating apprehensions of God, and heaven, and eternity.

Another effect of this faith, is seen in the restraining and controlling influence which it exerts upon the sentiments and habits of men. " The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." No man can deliberately contemplate the law of God in its precepts and sanction, with a full conviction that it comes to him clothed with divine authority, without seeing so much of his danger as will lay some restraint upon his mind and conduct. So it is with the

precepts and threatenings of the gospel. A serious belief of them will often awaken the man to some sense of duty. It will alarm his fears. It will deter him from many gross sins. " By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil." That fear which is inseparable from a belief of what Jehovah utters against transgressors, is sure to exert some salutary influence over the feelings and habits of all who so believe. Conscience is on the side of truth. Frequently it will enforce its decisions and check the progress of man in his wayward course. Unruly passions will experience restraint. Where the Scriptures are seriously believed, though the love of God be not in the heart, their truths will exert a decisive influence in favour of the sabbath, public worship, and religious order in the community. The testimony of experience is full to this point. In some instances it appears, that the influence of speculative faith is such, as materially to affect the government of families, and the education of children ; to produce regularity of habits, and correctness of moral principle and conduct in these little communities.

In a word then, it has the effect extensively, to impose salutary restraints, to prevent the commission of crimes, to elevate the tone of public morals, to promote good order in the community, to secure attendance on the ministrations of the gospel, to fix the attention of multitudes upon the momentous question of their future destiny. In this manner does it essentially subserve that blessed work of the Holy Spirit, by which so many are effectually " turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God."

But, important and extended as are the effects of historical faith, and much as its increase is to be desired ; there is need of a word of

caution, lest any should make it their resting place. Let it not be forgotten, that all its specific influence stops short of bringing men to Christ. We read of "many," who in the days of his humiliation, "believed on Him;" and who still, "did not confess Him,—for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Their belief was no more than speculative, for it was destitute of love to Him. Thus it came entirely short of that affectionate confidence in Christ which constitutes a spiritual union to Him, and gives a *saving* interest in the benefits of redemption. Never can it finally avail any who rest in it; for it may consist with impenitence, and be exercised while the *heart is not right with God*. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

To indulge a few reflections upon the preceding remarks, it may be observed, First, that they concur with a thousand facts to show the fallacy of that sophism, *it is no matter what a man believes if he is sincere in his belief*.

Secondly, How fearful is the responsibility of those who set themselves to prevent or weaken the faith of others in the truth of the Scriptures. If we have taken a just view of things, it is manifest, that so far as any do this, they aim a fatal blow at the best interests of society: they use their endeavours to fix upon their victims the curse of the second death: they seek to rob God of the glory and service which are due to Him, and which, but for them, others might be led to render Him.

Thirdly, It is no slight occasion for regret, that after having felt the expansive and solemn effects of a belief of the Scriptures upon the mind, and experienced so much of its kindly influence in regulating the conduct, so many should be satisfied with this; that they should con-

sent to have all that is exalting and moving in this subject, not only lost to them, but ultimately become the occasion of unavailing regret and self-condemnation. How devoutly is it to be desired, that all such persons should join the affections of their hearts with the dictates of their understandings, in a cordial reception of Christ by a *living* faith? Then would they possess a faith that would impart yet nobler views of God, and carry forth, not their thoughts only, but their affections also, to the blessed contemplation of celestial objects. This is a point which cannot be too earnestly pressed, nor too deeply felt. Directed by the light of Scripture, let the man that is disposed to rest satisfied with a bare speculative belief of the Bible, look away to the third heavens; there let him behold that throne where the eternal mind reigns in awful majesty over every world and every being;—a throne whence emanates a *law*, which, on pain of endless woe, demands an unreserved devotedness of every affection to God—a *discernment*, which pours its full omniscience on every object, even the most secret thought of every heart—and a *power*, which can as easily crush a world as an insect. Are we under this law, the subjects of this omniscient scrutiny, upheld and encircled by this power? How important then, that we hearken to that other voice, which from the same throne has said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye Him*."

Again, If the mind of the speculative believer here receives such influence from the Scriptures, it is wonderful to think of the effects which will be produced upon those who are to enjoy the immediate presence of God and the society of angels through eternity.

We have often wondered that those gifted minds which feel so

much contempt for the Bible, and at the same time, so much intellectual enthusiasm in the investigations of natural science, should not feel a deep interest in the truths of the Scriptures, that so they might have the prospect of an existence that would afford the amplest opportunity and means for an endless improvement of their minds. If so many intellectual treasures may be found in the turbid waters of this world, what must it be to ascend and forever dwell at the pure fountain of Infinite Knowledge.

To contemplate life as a transient day, just long enough to discipline the mind, and form the habits and taste for the enjoyment of intellectual delights ; then to see the declining sun hastening the moment that will palsy every power of the soul in death, and extinguish its last glimmerings in eternal night ; presents no very animating prospect, no ground for boasting of the dignity of man.

It would seem that the men to whom we allude, must pant for a purer region, and an endless day, where all their powers might find full scope for perpetual advancement in the acquisition of knowledge. Such a region is the heaven of the Scriptures ; such a day is the Christian's eternity. If they would rise to their proper dignity, let them enter the school of Christ, submit to the guidance of Omniscience, and receive "the wisdom that is from above." Then will they "understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Then will theirs be the wisdom whose *merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold,—more precious than rubies.* Then might they look forward to a world where all their energies would find untiring employ, and where their delighted souls would vie with celestial spirits in the praises of *Him who was slain*

and has redeemed them with his blood. Then might they "be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God." Then, in every scene of trouble which checkers this fleeting life, might they say with the apostle, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." W.

ON THE RELIGIOUS DUTIES OF THE TABLE.

Giving thanks at meals was a custom of the Jews. Talmudists and commentators tell us, from the rabbins and from Philo, that the Jews were accustomed to take neither meat nor drink without having first given praise and thanks to God, with invocation of his blessing—esteeming it profane before it was thus consecrated. The practice may have had its origin among them in their public religious services, being transferred from their sacrifices to their social meals. See 1 Samuel x. 13, where the people are mentioned as waiting at the sacrifice until Samuel came, "because he doth bless the sacrifice ; and afterwards they eat."

The custom is frequently mentioned in the New-Testament. Thus, our Saviour, when he fed the five thousand, "took the five loaves and the two fishes and looking up to heaven, blessed and brake," and distributed them among the multitude. And when he fed

the four thousand, "he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them." At a common meal at Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 30, he took the bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to those who supped with him. He attached this familiar ceremony to his sacramental supper,—teaching his disciples that as they gave thanks to their Heavenly Father for their daily bread, so especially should they bless him for *this* bread which was his body, and this cup which was his blood.

Paul among his shipwrecked companions at Melita, "took bread and gave thanks to God in presence of them all." He alludes to this custom, 1 Tim. iv. 4. and 1 Cor. x. 30. If the reader wishes to consult other passages, those already cited, with the help of a reference Bible, may point them out to him.

The words rendered *blessed* and *gave thanks* are used interchangeably, and therefore synonymously. Compare Math. xiv. 19 and John vi. 11, also Mark xiv. 22 and 1 Cor. xi. 24; or if the words had some different shades of meaning, each implied the other, and both suggested the idea of praise and thanksgiving.

From an examination of the Scriptures it appears that the Jews and early Christians, and our Lord himself, were accustomed to perform only *one* service at the table, and that *before* eating. I believe no instance is mentioned of a second service, except at the communion supper, and here it was a different thing from our *returning thanks*. It was a distinct blessing of the cup *after supper*, as the first service was of the bread. A custom of this kind seems at that time to have been introduced at their more *formal* and *convivial* meals, though it was not the ancient practice. When the meat was brought upon the table, the first service was performed, and then as we should say,

VOL. I.—No. VIII.

52

when the cloth was removed, and the wine was brought in, nearly the same words were repeated over the cup. Jahn quotes a form of table-service out of the Talmud, in which the repetition over the cup is in the precise words of the first service, except a verbal alteration to accommodate it to wine instead of bread. It does not appear that this second service was ever used at their ordinary meals. It was not used by the Saviour when he fed the multitudes, nor when he supped at Emmaus, nor by Paul on ship-board at Melita; and in the one instance in which it is mentioned, that of the sacramental supper, it was not a service which we imitate in returning thanks.

It would seem then, that our manner of performing the religious duties of the table, by asking a blessing and returning thanks is an innovation on the ancient practice,—for which I see no valid reason, though I perceive several considerable ones against it. Some of these I will state.

1. Two services are not essential, and I think not conformable, to the nature of the duty. The meaning of the ceremony I suppose to be this: it is proper that we should always cultivate a sense of our dependence on God, and our obligations to him for life and all its enjoyments; and the table furnishes a frequent and suitable occasion for the expression of these grateful acknowledgements. This expression is as well made in one service as in two. One is more *simple* and more *significant* than two; nor is it obvious to me how the *object* of the duty can be so divided as to render two services natural and proper.

2. The second service is a repetition of the first. The form of words may vary, but the thing expressed is virtually the same. It is at least so in general practice. Common minds do not make a definite distinction between them. Or

if they do attempt to avoid a repetition, they often use words unintelligibly. Thus we often hear a blessing asked *upon the food*,—which is to me without meaning; or “*that the food provided for us may nourish our mortal bodies*,”—which is to me an unnatural petition, because, so to speak, it is only praying that nature may have its course,—that an effect may follow its cause. Do we when we come to the table, ask for present blessings? They are already placed before us, and are present occasions of thanksgiving:—such the ancients made them. Do we ask for future blessings, that the supplies granted us to-day may be furnished us to-morrow? This is an acknowledgement of our dependance on God. Giving thanks is a similar sentiment expressed in a different form; and if both may not be included in the same form of words, there would seem to me to be a propriety in *inverting the order* of the two services as now performed, so that we should *come around* the table with thanksgiving for the blessings now provided for us, and *leave* it with petitions that the same bounteous Providence would supply our future wants.

If, however, the supposed distinction is a natural one, let him that thinks it so, point it out, and show that the one service is not involved in the other, and therefore not superfluous.

3. It multiplies, unprofitably, religious services. Especially in the morning. The reading of the Scriptures is followed by the morning prayer, and then in quick succession by the two services at the table. If we are not heard for our *much* speaking, are we for our *many times* speaking?

4. The inconvenience of the practice. I shall not dwell long on this head. It is often necessary for the mistress of the family to remain at the table longer than

the rest. At boarding houses the guests usually leave the table in succession. Some have finished their meal when others have just begun, and it does not suit their convenience or their patience to wait till all are ready to leave the table together. The same, and more, is true of public dinners, and of many other occasions. I have often observed at public dinners, that the first service was attended with propriety, but for the second there was no place found for “decency and order.” In all such cases, if both services be proper, there is a public neglect of duty, if the second be not performed; but if it be performed, it is done in incongruous circumstances, and is undevoutly attended to.

I have heard of a preacher who adduced *sixteen* reasons to his people, in favour of only one service:—I am satisfied with these *five*. Nay if four of them be taken away, there still remains to me the example of the Saviour and his ancient people, yea and of many of the excellent of my own generation.

The general prevalence of a custom is no infallible evidence of its propriety,—certainly it is not an imperious reason why it should not be made a matter of investigation. I am aware of the sensibility which many good people feel on this subject—as if the omission of the one service were presumptive proof of insincerity in the other, or an evident want of thankfulness to God. I have no wish to offend the consciences of others, or to interfere with their conscientious practice. As a man thinketh, so is he. If my brethren judge it proper for themselves, “whether they eat or drink” to *begin* and *end* with “looking up to heaven,” I would have them do so; and I exhort all men that they neglect not to acknowledge the bounty of the Divine Providence at their meals, but that they “give thanks always for

all things to God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," always mindful that he giveth them "life, and breath, and

all things," and that his goodness—if it be not lost upon them,—leadeth them to repentance.

PATERFAMILIAS.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

The following paper was written several months since with a view to its being published in New-York, and was adapted to circumstances which then existed in that city. It was, however, for the time laid by, and the season for which it was specially intended passed away. But the evil still exists, nay, is growing up to a colossal stature in the land, and demands that the note of warning be sent abroad by every means of publication, to arm the public sentiment against it. The suggestions of this paper, therefore, though out of place here, it is hoped may not be profitless. The writer does not indeed expect that they will reach, through this medium, the theatre-going ladies for whom they were intended, but he trusts that they will find many among the readers of the *Spectator*, to lift up the voice against the vices of the stage, and to strive for the recovery of that lost tone of morals, which gave no place to theatres among our virtuous ancestors.

A LETTER TO RESPECTABLE LADIES WHO FREQUENT THE THEATRE.

IN the republics of ancient Greece, a notorious corrupter of youth was banished from the commonwealth, as its worst enemy. If the theatre be tried by the same law, it must receive the same condemnation. The theatre has been a notorious corrupter of public morals from the beginning. There has

been no period in its history, when it was not the common haunt of profligacy, and the common abhorrence, I will not say, of pure religion merely, but of enlightened patriotism. The venerable men who composed the Congress of the Revolution, esteeming "true religion, and good morals as the only solid foundation of public liberty and happiness," and regarding "idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners," as the destruction of a free government, "*earnestly recommended to the several States, to take the most effectual measures for the suppressing of theatrical entertainments.*" If, then, patriotism has not become a degenerate sentiment in the daughters of the men of '76, I have an argument to them against the theatre.

I need not go to history, to prove to you its inherent demoralizing influence. For if the stage be better now than it formerly was, its present corruption proves it always to have been bad; or if it be worse now, there is a stronger reason why it should be abandoned. Worse it doubtless is, than it has been in our country; for this is the genius of the institution. Degeneracy is its natural progress. It is the nature of all public amusements of an exciting and immoral character, that there are no natural limits to their licentiousness. For while they agitate our stronger passions, our nicer feelings are overpowered; and, though they be of a na-

ture to create in us some misgivings, the example of the crowd sustains us. We return to them with our moral sense impaired; that which almost shocked, or half disgusted us before, is now become familiar; and some higher-wrought licentiousness is requisite to bring us up to our former pitch of excitement. Thus beasts and bloodhounds, grown too tame a spectacle, give place to gladiators. Thus one indecency at the theatre prepares us for a grosser one, till we come at length to Madame Hutin. Novelty is the ruling law of pleasure; but the only novelty a licentious stage admits of, is in newer degrees of corruption,—another and another startling breach on public decency.

The American stage has not yet attained to all the refinements of the European—though it is travelling hard to overtake them; and hampered as it still is, by our American manners, it exhibits the institution in a state of as great *purity*, perhaps, as we may ever hope to see it. Yet how far it is, even as it exists among us, from meriting a *Grecian condemnation*, yourselves may be the judges.

It is a presumptive argument for the corrupting tendency of any popular amusement, that it attracts the vicious to it,—as does a horse-race, or an English boxing match. And who compose the many at the theatre? I may not take you behind the scenes to show you who are there, nor speak of the private character of the actors; nor can the impure crowd of the gallery so much as be mentioned with decency in your presence.* But of

*I will here introduce an extract from a communication which very recently appeared in the New-York Spy, or Dramatic Repository. That paper is understood to be devoted to the theatre, and the writer of the communication is a professed admirer of the drama. It is amusing to see in what

those you see in the pit, how many are there, think you, whom the carriages in waiting, when the play is done, set down at doors where they would by no means wish their bosom-friends or death-bed conscien-

terms a person of his stamp—who of all men in the world “despises *cant* and *ultra* morality,” and righteousness “over much,”—can express his apprehensions for the stage, and storm forth his threatenings against the authors of its corruption.

“Until lately, the theatre in this city has, as I believe, been conducted with as much regard to decency and public purity as possible—at least the great evil of which I am now about to complain, never before, I am sure, existed. Managers have hitherto been content with having collected within the walls of their establishments, such only as came voluntarily, and paid their money freely. TRAPS to allure the low, the debased, and the most profligate, are, I believe, the very newest modes resorted to, to increase the funds of their treasuries. I have been assured, from authority that admits not of dispute, that in at least one of our new theatres, a practice has just been commenced which bids fair to produce more real and frightfully injurious results to the morals of youth, than the brains of the “righteous over-much” ever imagined could possibly be occasioned. Free admissions are now being dispensed to the public courtezans of the town, in order that their vile paramours may be induced to follow them, whereby the receipts of the house may be nightly increased; and the profits of the lessees of the saloons greatly enhanced in consequence of the greater demand for their various species of intoxicating beverage. This, Mr. Editor, is a course, monstrous and unparalleled, and will certainly lead to the most disastrous consequences. As an admirer of a pure and MORAL STAGE, it becomes you—it becomes all of us—to effect, if we can, the crushing in the bud of such flagitious procedures. I shall say no more at present: but if the enormity be not immediately cancelled—its authors—its guilty authors—shall be made to tremble, by one who is neither a

LIBERTINE NOR A FANATIC.

Alas for the purity of the stage now! Alas for our chaste school of morals—if this *beginning* of corruption be not “crushed in the bud!” “Pub-

ces to follow them?—And even of those who occupy an honorable seat in the boxes, how many an individual may you not discover, who, for effeminateness and profligacy, were a fitter knight for Cataline, than for the virtuous company of Cato. And why is it,—if the Theatre be not a corrupting institution—that, wherever the corner-stone of a new play-house is laid, there every hovel, and stall, and cellar in which wickedness may house itself, doubles and trebles its former rent? Why is it that the streets and lanes leading to every haunt of infamy in the city, resound nightly to wheels passing to and from the Theatre; and why is it that so many heart-broken mothers, and grief-stricken sisters, mourn hopelessly over their profligate sons and brothers?

This is the Theatre. I do not ask how your patriotism can uphold it, but I inquire, What *is* that gener-

lie courtezans of the town!"—welcomed to the play-house, with "their vile paramours?" "Flagitious procedure!" "Course monstrous and unparallelled," and "disastrous" of "consequences"! Over which even Kean and Madame Hutin, and this "admirer of a moral stage" might join in consistent lamentation, because of "the morals of our youth," and because of the scandal of the profession in the eyes of the "righteous over-much."

But why not admit the class of persons you object to, and that freely, and with open doors? Why exclude from your public "school of morals" those whose morals most need reform? Are courtezans and their paramours alone, of all the wicked of our race, to be shut away from all good influences? For shut them out from your charity, and whither will they go? I know of no other place of salutary discipline, except the theatre, in which these profligates are willing to be found. Into the assembly of the righteous over-much they are no more likely to fall than yourselves.

One object of the practice which our censor in the Spy thus loudly ob-

jects, is, he tells us, to lance ous love of country, for which your sex is so much honored? In other nations it may be an idle admiration of court-pageantry, or military glory; but in the daughters of America it is, I trust, a more enlightened sentiment. It remembers the manly virtues of the Revolution. It looks with proud complacency on that incorruptible integrity, and lofty sentiment, and hardy enterprise, which are the true greatness of a people; and on the cowardly vices of the dissolute it looks with a proportionate disgust. It compares our own with other countries, and rejoices in its superior freedom, but it rejoices more in that superior purity of manners which makes us *capable* of freedom. The patriotism then, which tolerates the Theatre, is either spurious or blind. Blind, if it does not discern the tendency of the Theatre, and spurious if it disregards it.

Were I addressing those of my

the profits of the saloons by increasing "the demand for their various species of intoxicating beverage." The bars of the Lafayette theatre, which is the least or nearly the least popular, I believe, of the six theatres of New-York, are rented for *seventy-five dollars a week*. It is obvious that a great deal of liquor must be sold to enable the lessee to pay this sum weekly, besides clearing a profit to himself. Add to this all the liquor sold by the stalls and cellars which crowd the vicinity of a theatre, and it will be seen how much dissipation, drunkenness, quarrelling, and crime, must result, from the existence of one of these institutions. The quality of the fountain may be tested in the streams. If you would know what kind of morals it is that the stage teaches, our prisons and our almshouses, and the records of our courts may inform you. The records of our courts have not yet been consulted on this subject, but this has sometimes been done in England. One parish alone within the space of two years, suffered an expense of thirteen hundred pounds for criminal prosecutions which had their origin in the theatre.

own sex, I might urge this argument to their patriotism more at length ; but there are other considerations which are more peculiarly appropriate to you. If an enlightened love of country be opposed to your attendance at the Theatre, still more opposed to such a practice is a just sense of what is due to yourselves. For how can you reconcile your presence there with *female delicacy* and *self-respect*?—to be entertained with rehearsals and exhibitions which would be scandalous in any lady's drawing-room?—nay to be even *seen* there, where apart from the indecencies of the stage itself, the modesty of your sex is scandalized by the very presence of the audience? It is not enough to say of the company at a play-house, that indecent characters are there: the place is rank and noisome with them; the vulgar and profane, the dissolute and lost to shame, resort in crowds thither as if it were their own assembly and proper place of meeting, and the virtuous and refined are altogether the lesser number—the poor and shamed minority. Where the vile are entertained, the virtuous are scandalized, and where the vulgar applaud, the refined suffer indignity.

The late introduction of Madame Hutin at the Bowery, the managers, or their hireling writers, tell us, was a “bold experiment.” So it doubtless was. But upon whom or what was the experiment made? Upon the *moral sense* of the rabble in the gallery? Upon the manly decency of the apprentices, and clerks, and transient men in the pit? No, but upon the modesty of the ladies: upon the shrinking delicacy which the managers feared might still reside in the pure bosoms of those I am addressing. For they hesitated whether after all your discipline in their “school of morality,” you were yet quite prepared for the creature of the French stage

they introduced to you, and for whom they seemed to expect your quiet sufferance out of regard to the less fastidious of the audience, if not your welcoming applauses on your own account. It was at your expense alone, of all who composed their “splendid house,” that they boasted of the “success” of their experiment, and that “there was now nothing to fear.”

But their vaunting was libellous. Your drooping heads told them, that yours was not yet that easy modesty which might be thus far presumed upon without offence; and to recover your complacency, they added more fig-leaves to their Parisian favorite's apron. But the object was gained. It sufficed for the present. The crowd with one voice was with them, and *your frown was not followed by your absence*. They penitently restored an inch while you graciously yielded an ell. They respectfully humoured your prejudices, and you condescendingly forgave their licentiousness. Vice always puts on meekness when virtue looks distressed, and seduction is a most respectful wooer.

It would be rudeness to say, you are in the school of apt masters, and that they will make one attainment of the scholar subservient to another. But I may be permitted to remark, that none know better than the managers of theatres, that the transition from the rudiments to the higher branches is by successive and easy steps. And though they will not attempt to overcome your *prejudices*, as they call your modest scruples, all at once, yet, it will not be, because they do not understand the arts of their profession, if, one by one, they do not overcome them all at last.

In respect to Madame Hutin it was very natural that her Bowery friends should forgive her, for Folly, as well as Wisdom, is justified of her children; but as it respects the

public generally, we may thank the "enterprising manager" that he has called forth its voice in such a manner as shows, not merely its disgust at the exhibition of French nudities among us, but its virtuous indignation at the whole mass of theatrical abominations. For, not to make too much of Madame Hutin, as though hers were an individual shame, there are a thousand sins against decency, scarcely less heinous than her performances;—things which equally offend modesty and shock piety, and to speak of which were to speak of matters of common notoriety. Your popular plays abound with them. And these things are exhibited for *your amusement*? But if they are, and you can regard them with complacency; nay, if you can suffer them with any degree of patience, if you do not feel that every virtuous sentiment of your bosoms is outraged by them, what is the world to think of your respect for modesty, for piety, and for yourselves?

It might be asked too, what opinion your male acquaintances will form,—your gallant friends especially who go with you to the Theatre, and scan your countenances while you heed the play. For, depend upon it, the effect of these "experiments" will not escape their scrutiny. And be assured, the conclusion they will form will not flatter you; for your very presence there will more than contradict an occasional tinge upon your cheek, while the modesty that can encounter every grossness abroad, will naturally be regarded as little better than prudery at home. True modesty is not the pliant osier, that does not fear the storm: it is rather the timid sensitive-plant, that shrinks from the touch of rudeness.

What apology you may form in respect to the indecencies of the stage, I cannot easily imagine. To say you admit them for their own sake, is to deny your respect for

virtue. To say you bear with them for the sake of the better parts of the performances, is to make amusement of more account than decency: it is to sacrifice your self-respect to your love of pleasure. To say you suffer them because your acquaintance do, is to say propriety is with you a thing of fashion. You are drifters with the current be it clear or muddy. To say you tolerate them, like good republicans, in deference to the loose majority of the house, is to sanction their profligacy, and consent to your own reproach. You condescend to a compromise with the vile, that you may share with them the amusements of the place. In common fairness, you can do no less. It were a hard case, if privileges which equally belong to all, were made the monopoly of a few.—Verily, the theatre is a most peculiar institution!—without its parallel, except perhaps in the ancient feasts of Cybele and Saturn. Here virtue stoops to vice and shame is privileged; wealth and fashion forget their aristocracy, and elegance and taste consort with more than plebeian coarseness.

If in these reflections I have dwelt exclusively on the grosser immoralities of the stage, it is because they are of a more obvious and tangible character, and because circumstances have lately directed the public mind to them; and not because they have exclusively affected my own mind. For corrupting as the looser immoralities of the stage are, particularly to my own sex, it may be doubted whether other effects of the drama are not even more pernicious to the female mind. A mother might fear the polluting comedy for her son, but more the absorbing tragedy for her daughter. Pride, ambition, and revenge, lust, seduction, and murder, are, I need not tell you, the materials of which the tragedy is composed; and it is not to be ima-

gined that the delicate mind of a female, young and imaginative as she may be, can be agitated by scenes like these, heightened as their effect is, by the accompaniments of the stage—the scenery, the acting, the night season, the contagious sympathy of a crowd—and yet suffer no depravation. If she be not herself transferred to the world of fiction which enchains her senses, and become a sombre and artificial being, the effect will at least be something worse. The holy sympathies of nature, which God gave her for other purposes than pastime, by constantly perverting, she at length becomes bereft of ; and acquires something of the same recklessness of feeling which she witnesses in the drama. Indeed, it is not to be conceived, that she should make herself familiar with all the desperate passions and dark adventures of human life, as matters of amusement, and lose nothing of the native delicacy and incorruptness of her mind.—But it was not my design to analyze the stage, nor to attempt to show its various evil influences. Much is to be set down to wasted sympathies and perverted sensibilities—to vice made attractive and virtue made repulsive—to time mispent, money misapplied, and a heart deceived. Particularly, it was not my design to speak of the repugnance of the stage to the spirit of the gospel ; although from this source I might derive the most impressive considerations. If the language of Religion is ‘Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, shall inherit the kingdom of God,’ how shall she not utter her anathema against the nursing mother of all these abominations ? And how shall her divine influences follow you thither—where your countenance is with her enemies, and your hands help to build the strong hold of her adversary ? And

though *you* may escape the evil, you cannot but know that to thousands of others the theatre is the gateway to ruin ; and you cannot but reflect how repugnant it must be to Christian benevolence, if through encouraging the theatre you contribute to the spread of a moral pestilence around you, or if haply by your example, you should lead even one fellow-being to the chambers of death

But I will not dwell on this view of the subject. I have wished chiefly to suggest to you other considerations, and such as are peculiar to your sex. I have wished to address you as *ladies*—as those in whom I might find modesty, intelligence, and virtue, and all the elevated characteristics of your sex. And now may I not ask such, if the respect which is due to yourselves and to your sex, if a just regard for the common decencies of life, if every sentiment of virtue, of piety, and of patriotism, rises up in remonstrance against the theatre, are you not persuaded to withdraw yourselves forever from that corrupting institution ? Do you say, your withdrawing will not deter others ? It is always well to do what is right, do others as they may. But you underrate your influence. Let the theatre once be forsaken of you, and depend upon it, the respectable of the other sex will promptly retire with you. They will hardly think it for their credit to be where plumes and bonnets are ashamed to keep them in countenance. The merely decent will soon follow ; and the place will then be left *only* to the vile, and no respectable man will think of showing himself at the playhouse, any more than he will think of being seen at certain other places of resort, of which the playhouse will then be regarded as the chief. To the vile then let it be left. It is their proper house of assembly. Do this act of justice to yourselves and to your country, and

you shall at least receive the gratitude of one who is

A BROTHER.

REMARKS ON THE USUAL STYLE OF
THE ANNUAL NARRATIVES OF EC-
CLESIASTICAL BODIES.

I AM accustomed to look over the published "minutes" of our principal ecclesiastical assemblies, and particularly their annual "narratives of the state of religion within their bounds." I have just laid down that of the last General Assembly at Philadelphia. It would seem to me that a large number of clergymen, coming together from all parts of the land, might bring with them a great deal of definite and valuable information respecting the moral condition of the country, and that this information, properly embodied and sent forth, might produce some good impression on the public mind. Our annual "narratives," however, are commonly written in such a manner as to produce, I apprehend, but very little interest. There is a certain round of topics, and a certain sameness of style in them from year to year. They resemble in this respect our annual thanksgiving proclamations, which, with only a change of date, might answer for a decade of years as well as for one, and might as well be stereotyped as to put the printers to the annual trouble of setting up the types anew. They uniformly give us "a mixture of light and shade, of lamentation and rejoicing." Thus, for the dark shades, we have a regular report of certain immoralities which, the meeting laments, *still* exist in divers parts of the land, as if we were in the annual expectation of these immoralities having come to an end—namely, *sabbath-breaking, profane swearing, intemperance, gambling*, and the like. These several topics are commonly spread out into as many

paragraphs. Then follows usually another class of things which are amiss; namely, *lukewarmness in professors, errors in doctrine, heretical teachers, conformity to the world, fashionable amusements, &c.*

It is not obvious to me what benefit is effected by the stated and general mention of these things as matters of fact, from year to year. It conveys no information, imparts no impulse to the public mind, and originates no measures; while it does impart prolixity to a document which, being intended for general perusal, ought to be as dense and forcible as possible. If a particular vice exists peculiarly in a particular place, or if any public immorality is becoming increasingly and alarmingly prevalent in the land, then the *distinct* and solemn reprehension of it by a venerable assembly of ministers may have some salutary effect; but I look for no such effect from an annual, and very general, and matter-of-course mention, of immoralities which exist in no new degree, and in no place in particular, but are the common immoralities of the world,—which have existed and will exist every where among men, till a generation shall be born more happy than the world has yet seen. I attach, indeed, no great importance to these strictures, but it may be worth suggesting whether the introduction of the topics I am speaking of, may not as well be, at least sometimes intermitted, if not generally omitted.

There are several respects in which the kind of documents I am considering might be animadverted upon; but I shall not particularize them. They should be written, if they are worth writing at all, with more freshness of matter and manner—in a word, with more elaborateness and force of style, and more fullness and definiteness of information. Whether they might be made to embody such a mass of collected *facts* as should give us an-

nually a distinct moral map of our country—such a map, for example, as was furnished by the “Macedonian Cry” at the date of its publication, and whether they might exhibit the collected results of inquiries on a great variety of subjects, such as prisons, pauperism, the *statistics* of intemperance, (and not merely the general fact of its existence,) the education of the young—in some States shamefully unattended to if not unprovided for,—together with many other things respecting which extensive information is desirable, but not easily attainable by local societies, or legislatures—whether these things, I say, may be comprised in a paper which professes to inform us of the moral state of the country, I merely set down as a query. But it surely seems to me, that a congress of divines might give us something more than a few trite remarks on a few common-place subjects.

CIVILIS.

To the Editor of the Christian Spectator.

YOUR Correspondent, Franklin, in your number for June, remarks that “a writer under the signature of V. in the Spectator, seems to think that Walker’s dictionary is good authority for pronunciation.” As it was no part of my object to question his authority in this particular, I did not *directly* do it. I am glad F. has taken this occasion to give the information contained in his short article. If the opinion of an anonymous writer can be of any weight, I wish to say that I am unwilling even to “seem to think Walker’s dictionary,” or in fact any other dictionary, good authority for departing from the current pronunciation of “respectable people” in the region where we reside. Why should a lawyer lose his cause, or a preacher his grand object, by becoming a polite barbarian to those

whom he addresses! This I witnessed, some twenty years ago, in one of the ablest ministers this country has produced; and it afforded me a durable caution.

V.

REMARKS ON MUSICAL TASTE.

HE, who should walk forth for enjoyment at eventide, if accompanied by one entirely insensible to the glories of heaven and the loveliness of earth, would find his own emotions most sadly disturbed, as he might utter them to his heedless companion; and would most heartily regret, that he went not alone to indulge his admiration and his love. The sympathies of the grove and the brook, and of those beings whose inarticulate voices proclaim their interest in the scene, would be to him more pleasant than the blighting presence of his fellow, whose soul disdains to mingle with the spirit that breathes around him, and from whom creation solicits in vain the smallest tribute of praise. The traveller, who has made his last effort to gain an Alpine summit, from which the prospect of grandeur and beauty is so delightfully overwhelming to his soul, exhausted as he is, would rather expose himself to all the dangers of solitude, than be attended by another whose feelings will give no responses to what is calling so loudly from every object beneath his eye. His excitement might almost prompt him to exclaim; Better for me to die here alone, than to be aided by one in whom I must witness so cruel, so unnatural a destitution of the noblest, the sublimest feelings of the soul. In each of these instances, the insensibility manifested seems to the enraptured heart, not less inconsistent and unexpected, than the blast of the wintry storm, breaking in on the playful scenes of

the summer breeze, or the chill of death, stopping at once the warm current of youthful life. We all feel that this is an unnatural stupidity ; and that he, who has it, by some inhuman process little better than suicide, has rendered himself unfit to live in a world which the Creator has adorned with all that can regale the feelings and awaken admiration. A being, who has thus thrown aside every thing requisite to make the way of life pleasant, or even passable, we should either shun as a monster, or pity as insane. And happy indeed it is, that such destroyers of feeling are rarely, if ever, found ; for the voice of nature cries out against them, and education and Christian principle unite in proscribing them as outlaws from the sympathies of life.

But is it not strange, that we should regard as so sacred, one class of pleasures, and condemn so readily and so severely, him who casts upon them a petrifying glance ; and yet permit another class, not less transporting, not less congenial to the soul, and not less our birthright from heaven, to be disregarded, and despised, and thrown out as useless ; and, at the same time, should feel that no violence is done to our natures, and no injury committed ? In acting thus, we are not unlike a gardner, who most carefully encloses a flowerbed, and yet exposes his greenhouse to every lawless invader ; or a man, who arms himself against the highway robber, and unbars his doors to the midnight assassin. He who made the eye, and embellished his works for its admiration and delight, planted also the ear, and awoke for its enjoyment that harmony which was first heard on earth, at the dawn of the creation, which has since poured forth its uninterrupted strains, and which will not cease till time is no more, and even then will only be lost in the grand chorus of heaven.

It is a truth, as easily proved as any other principle of philosophy, that the love of natural scenery, and the love of music, are alike implanted by the Creator in the soul of man. And it is difficult to conceive, by what wonderful machination any persons have so successfully destroyed the one, and have not ventured to impair the other. Perhaps it is from the mistaken notion, that one may be put to death with impunity, while it would be impious to do violence to the other ; or that one is given only to a portion of mankind, while the other is the common property of the whole. All the varieties of taste have their foundation in nature, and there is no excuse for neglecting to cultivate any of them, unless we have the hardihood to say, our Maker has given us what we may well overlook as unimportant, and what, in our own superior wisdom, we may venture to disregard as useless. Men are not composed of so heterogeneous materials, and formed on so different models, that only one part of them can be susceptible of the influence of music ; can be melted into tenderness, or aroused to loftier feeling and action, be borne by some wild notes away to fairy lands, or rise on sublimer strains almost to catch the symphonies of heaven ; while the other part are doomed to be as insensible as if the stillness of the tomb were around them, or the voice of melody had never broken primeval silence. Prejudice and education may weaken and even destroy some portion of our natural susceptibilities ; and circumstances may call for the sacrifice of our happiest feelings. But let not nature herself be made responsible for the defect, or accused of the blame. She is so far from deserving this reproach, that whenever permitted to use her influence and raise her voice, it is to manifest her delight in song. In the earliest days, among the wildest savages, in

the most uncultivated deserts, music has ever been co-existent and co-extensive with human language. Thought does not go forth sooner in words, than emotion in melody. The unadulterated feelings of the child show their gladness in the measured movements and the modulated tones.

Music does not indeed start up spontaneously, like the verdure of spring. But its principles, its harmony, its various combinations, are founded on the immovable basis of nature, the work of the same hand that adorns the earth and paints the rainbow. And, therefore, those who slight it, should remember, they are slighting what God has made, and what is as imperishable as his own immutable laws.

With regard to musical taste, we are what we make ourselves; and not under the resistless control of an original constitution. There is as good and as ready an excuse for him who turns away with cold disdain from the splendor and beauty which heaven and earth put forth all their power to produce; as for another, who sits with complacent indifference when the choral strains are waking around him. Nor do I deem it too much to say, that the Christian may as well be justified in being uninterested in the devotions, as in being unaffected by the songs, of the sanctuary. It is natural and proper, the dictate of penitential sorrow, a privilege which only infinite goodness can impart, and which only an humbled sinner can enjoy,—to go to the throne of mercy and plead there for pardon and for grace. It is alike natural and proper, alike the dictate of pious feeling, and alike the privilege which a gracious God has given to his intelligent creatures,—to “enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise.” No one, who is called a Christian, would consider himself as worthy of the name, if he felt that prayer is an exercise

in which he cannot engage. Nor ought any one to believe his “heart right in the sight of God,” the emotions of which will not kindle at the sound of His praise.

The great reason why any persons are unmoved by the power of music is, that opposite feelings have been so long cherished, and have grown so strong, that they will not give place to those in unison with her strains. The chords in the heart may be so long unstrung, or so impaired by a hostile atmosphere, or so broken by violent passion, as to lose all power for tuneful vibration. Let a man persuade himself, that he has little or no relish for these pleasures, and manifest his indifference, till what was at first only false persuasion, becomes the settled conviction of his feelings; and then he may perhaps bid defiance to all the influence of harmony. Then tones from the harps of angels, may be as ineffectual on his ear, as would have been the songs they sung in Bethlehem, chanted over the dead sea. I had almost said, that an indifference to sacred song, may become so great and so obstinate in the soul which really loves other religious duties, that, when it shall go to the courts of heaven, and find it resounding with anthems of joyous praise, it will feel itself unfitted for admission there, and would gladly return to its mortal dwelling, for the enjoyment of those exercises in which alone it had found any interest.

It is not said, that every voice can make “sweet melody;” though the number which cannot, with proper care and proper interest, would be small indeed. But it is said, that every person can have a congeniality with the spirit of music. And those who have it not, ought to feel that they have lost a part of their nature, as well as deprived of no small portion of their appropriate enjoyment. Is there any one, who cannot distinguish between the

voice of gladness and the voice of grief?—to whom the accents of friendship and the ravings of anger are alike unmeaning and indefinite?—whose heart is as unaffected by the tones of natural love and tenderness, as by the careless trampling of a beast?—who, when a bright morning of spring opens upon him with ten thousand notes of joy, can have the same sensations as when he gropes along a dark dull night of autumn? If no heart can be thus insensible and unmoved, unless chilled in death; then there is no heart that cannot be excited by music. For this makes its appeals to no other principles, and demands no other feelings than those, on which love and gladness, and hope and sorrow depend for all their excitement. Does affection delight to express itself in soft and gentle tones? then surely these tones will lose none of their meaning and their interest, when made still more soft and gentle, by the varieties of modulation, and the dying cadence. Does gladness always accompany its smiles with a full and sprightly voice; then to make that voice still more full and sprightly, is but increasing its facility of expression. Does an excess of joyous emotion often terminate in a more pleasing sadness; then how can it utter itself more naturally and more agreeably, than in the loud sonorous major key, subsiding and falling away into the plaintive minor? Or does grief make itself known by slow and solemn sounds; then certainly it may do this more freely, when these sounds are made more expressively slow, and more deeply solemn.

The enjoyment of music in all its varieties, is only an indulgence of the common, yet various emotions of our hearts, and an indulgence of them too in the way which nature has generously provided. To be interested in it, demands no more of any one, than what he unconsciously gives to his daily social

sympathies. Does he go among the sorrowing, he imbibes the spirit of sadness; or among the joyous, he takes a portion of their joy. If he wishes for any happiness in society, he lets the current of his feelings be rapid or slow, ruffled or smooth, according to the nature of the course he is pursuing. He does not remain in one unvaried mood, and harbor the same unchanging thoughts, whatever persons he may meet with, and whatever scenes he may witness. Would he as freely surrender himself to the influence of music, as he does to the influence of the common occurrences of life; he would find that that also has a power not less resistless and diversified. Shakespeare could not have given a better description of the settled and bloody purpose of Cassius, than to say; "*He hears no music.*" At that time the conspirator would have passed heedless through the sublimest, or the loveliest scene on earth. Even the cry of suffering affection could not have gained his attention. For one fixed and overwhelming thought had driven from his soul every other interest.

Delight in music does not require skill in executing it, any more than delight in poetry requires the genius of a poet, or the love of a landscape, ability to throw its "lights and shadows" upon the canvass. All it asks, is the spontaneous tribute of the heart; and this it will receive, if philosophical indifference, or mistaken disrelish, has not enclosed the casket in bars of iron.

It is indeed a lamentable truth, that on every subject of taste, feeling may be effectually suppressed. There are those, who can view the loveliest object in Eden, bidding her final adieu to the loveliness she took not with herself, and shedding her last tears on the flowers she had reared with so much fondness; and still can be as uninterested, as if they were looking out on the inde

finite expanse of a clouded heaven. And when over this scene of most melting tenderness, there is breathed the most enchanting melody; the veriest trifle, sliding into their minds, shows that however deeply others may feel, impenetrable ice is around their hearts. There are singers, whose voices can be tuned to as sweet harmony, and can shout strains as exactly modulated, and of as great variety of compass, as the notes of the organ;—and as cold and heartless too;—because their own souls are as void of feeling and interest as the tubes of the instrument. Without the kindlings of the spirit within, music can neither be performed nor listened to with any effect.

With regard to this subject as a mere matter of taste, I do not expect there can be a similarity of sentiment, any more than on either of the other classes of kindred pleasures. The feelings of men will remain at variance as they now are, not because they are not susceptible of delight from the same source; but because prejudice and association have diversified all their enjoyments. Some will find relief to their sorrows by the soothing melody; others will go and weep in silence. Some will give all their sympathies to a tale of fiction; and others will consider the plodding through its pages, as a penance, which they can do but once in their lives. Some have excitement for every occasion, for every pleasure or pain they witness in those around them, and their hearts are the first things they present;—while the interest and feelings of others are in eternal solitude, as unexcited by the scenes they pass through, as indifferent to the objects, appealing the most powerfully to their passions, as if they had wandered away from them all into a Siberian desert.

To prevent this diversity of taste,

would be as impossible, as to give the same proportions to every figure, or the same lustre to every gem. To do it, we must furnish all at the commencement of life, with the same delights and associations in the nursery; the same system of early education; giving to the view of each the same series of occurrences and the same variety of objects; and keeping them all too in similar situations and employments:—a plan, which, if it were not as impossible to execute, would perhaps be as undesirable, as to make the earth's surface a plain, or to impart to every flower the same hue and fragrance.

But with regard to the music of the Temple, there need not, and should not, be any diversity of interest among Christian worshippers. The objects and associations it presents are all deeply affecting to the heart that finds delight in the service of God. It is a reproach and a sin to the disciple of Jesus to sing, or to hear, *his* praises with indifference. No distaste can be pleaded as an excuse; for none exists, that may not be overcome. When the plaintive strain is added to the sentiment of penitential sorrow, every regenerated soul should kindle, and grow warm, and feel a holier ardor in the exercises of devotion. And when loftier notes attempt the praise of the King of kings, that soul should swell with deeper and more solemn reverence, as it may know, from this prelude to the hosannas of heaven, what will be its employment through eternity. Never, never, let Christians say, that they cannot engage in sacred song. They, and they alone, can feel its spirit and perform it with acceptance. Let each remember, that, when he becomes listless to its voice, he desecrates the choicest, the holiest offerings of the altar. Let him remember too, that, in thus acting, he says to the irreligi-

he therefore permits them to infer, that the worship of God may be all insincere and formal. They will feel, that indifference in one act, is only hypocrisy in another; and if a Christian can justify himself in a careless song of praise; a heartless prayer too may be heard in heaven.

In respect to this part of divine service, there has been, and still is, a criminal neglect in our churches. Every Christian assembly feels the obligation to give permanent support to the preaching of the gospel. But when that is done, there is little or no care taken, that this other part of worship, without which the messages of grace must lose much of their effect and interest, should be conducted in a proper style and with its peculiar benefits. Too often it is given up exclusively to those, who are regardless of all religious duties, as things pertaining to their everlasting peace; and, excepting the occasional temporary excitements from accidental causes, is suffered to languish and die. Thus the devout worshippers forego all the inspiring and blessed influence of sacred song; and soon, from a careless habit, forget to "*praise the Lord for his goodness,*" and feel, that rising to pray and at-

tention to the sermon, is all they have to do in the house of God. Instead of being awakened to deeper devotion and holier ardor, they are listless and indifferent during the interval between the prayers and the preaching, and with duller and colder sensibilities, go through all the public services. There should be a consistency, and a uniformity in Christian worship. The various acts should be performed with one spirit, and with one permanent glow of pious affection. The emotions in the exercise of prayer should not be suppressed by a heartless, unmeaning attempt to chant the praise of the Most High. It is like throwing water on a kindling spark, or smothering the first feeble breathings of resuscitated life. Devout supplication prepares the soul for devout singing; and this inspires it with better feelings to listen to the declarations of heavenly mercy. There is then a sacred obligation resting upon all Christians—an obligation which they can never throw off and be at peace with their consciences and with God, to be permanently interested in this part of public service, and to make every necessary effort to conduct it with propriety and effect. D.

THEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS.

THE EVILS OF KNOWLEDGE.

In much wisdom there is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow. Eccles. i. 18.

"FIRST of all then, knowledge is the parent of sorrow from its very nature, as being the instrument and means by which the afflicting quality of the object is conveyed to the mind; for as nothing delights, so nothing troubles till it is known.

gious, there are services in religion which are unmeaning and vain; and The merchant is not troubled as soon as his ship is cast away, but as soon as he hears it is.

The affairs and objects that we converse with, have most of them a fitness to afflict and disturb the mind. And as the colors lie dormant, and strike not the eye, till the light actuates them into a visibility, so those afflictive qualities

never exert their sting till knowledge displays them, and slides them into the apprehension.

Nihil scire, vita jucundissima est.

It is the empty vessel that makes the merry sound ; which is evident from those whose intellectuals are ruined with phrensy or madness ; who so merry, so free from the lash of care ? their understanding is gone, and so is their trouble.

It is the philosopher that is pensive, that looks downwards in the posture of the mourner. It is the open eye that weeps.

Aristotle affirms, that there was never a great scholar in the world, but had in his temper a dash and mixture of melancholy ; and if melancholy be the temper of knowledge, we know that also it is the complexion of sorrow, the scene of mourning and affliction.

Solomon could not separate his wisdom from vexation of spirit. We are first taught our knowledge with the rod, and with the severities of discipline. We get it with some smart, but improve it with more.

The world is full of objects of sorrow, and knowledge enlarges our capacities to take them in. None but the wise man can know himself to be miserable."

* * * *

" Pass we now to show, how that knowledge is the cause of sorrow, in respect to the troublesome acquisition of it. For is there any labor comparable to that of the brain ? any toil like a continual digging in the mines of knowledge ? any pursuit so dubious and difficult as that of truth ? any attempt so sublime as to give a reason of things ?

A man must be always engaged in difficult speculation, and endure all the inconveniences that attend it ; which indeed are more than attend any other sort of life whatsoever.

The soldier, it is confessed, converses with dangers, and looks death in the face ; but then he

bleeds with honor, he grows pale gloriously, and dies with the same heat and fervor that gives life to others.

But he does not, like the scholar, kill himself in cold blood ; sit up and watch when there is no enemy ; and, like a silly fly, buzz about his own candle till he has consumed himself.

Then again : the husbandman who has the toil of sowing and reaping, he has his reward in his very labor ; and the same corn that employs, also fills his hand. He who labors in the field indeed wears, but then he also helps and preserves his body.

But study, it is a weariness without exercise, a laborious sitting still, that wracks the inward, and destroys the outward man ; that sacrifices health to conceit, and clothes the soul with the spoils of the body ; and, like a stronger blast of lightning, not only meets the sword, but also consumes the scabbard.

Nature allows men a great freedom, and never gave an appetite but to be an instrument of enjoyment ; nor made a desire, but in order to the pleasure of its satisfaction. But he that will increase knowledge, must be content not to enjoy ; and not only to cut off the extravagancies of luxury, but also to deny the lawful demands of convenience, to forswear delight, and look upon pleasure as his mortal enemy.

He must call that study, that is indeed confinement ; he must converse with solitude, walk, eat, and sleep thinking, read volumes, devour the choicest authors, and (like *Pharaoh's* kine) after he has devoured all, look lean and meagre. He must be willing to be weak, sickly, and consumptive ; even to forget when he is hungry, and to digest nothing but what he reads.

He must read much, and perhaps meet with little ; turn over much trash for one grain of truth ; study

antiquity till he feels the effects of it; and, like the cock in the fable, seek pearls in a dunghill, and perhaps rise to it as early. This is, *Esse quod Arcesilas ærumnosique*

Solones :

To be always wearing a meditating countenance, to ruminate, mutter, and talk to a man's self, for want of better company; in short, to do all those things, which in other men are counted madness, but in a scholar pass for his profession.

We may take a view of all those callings, to which learning is necessary, and we shall find that labour and misery attend them all. And first, for the study of physic: Do not many lose their own health, while they are learning to restore it to others? Do not many shorten their days, and contract incurable diseases, in the midst of *Galen* and *Hippocrates*? get consumptions amongst receipts and medicines, and die while they are conversing with remedies?

Then for the law: Are not many called to the grave, while they are preparing for a call to the bar? Do they not grapple with knots and intricacies, perhaps not so soon dissolved as themselves? Do not their bodies wither and decay, and, after a long study of the law, look like an estate that has passed through a long suit in law?

But, above all, let the divine here challenge the greatest share; who, if he takes one in ten in the profit, I am sure, may claim nine in ten in the labour. 'Tis one part of his business, indeed, to prepare others for death; but the toil of his function is like to make the first experiment upon himself.

People are apt to think this an easy work, and that to be a divine is nothing else but to wear black, to look severely, and to speak confidently for an hour; but confidence and propriety is not all one; and if we fix but upon this one part of his employment, as easy as it seems to be,

Expertus multum sudes, multumque labores.

But the divine's office spreads itself into infinite other occasions of labour; and, in those that reach the utmost of so great a profession, it requires depth of knowledge, as well as heights of eloquence.

To sit and hear is easy, and to censure what we have heard, much easier. But whatsoever his performance is, it inevitably puts us upon an act of religion; if good, it invites us to a profitable hearing; if otherwise, it inflicts a short penance, and gives an opportunity to the virtue of patience.

But, in sum, to demonstrate and set forth the divine's labour, I shall but add this, that he is the only person to whom the whole economy of Christianity gives no cessation, nor allows him so much as the Sabbath for a day of rest.—*Robert South.*

GODLY SORROW, AND THE SORROW OF THE WORLD.

Usually, the sting of sorrow is this, that it neither removes nor alters the thing we sorrow for; and so is but a kind of reproach to our reason, which will be sure to accost us with this dilemma. Either the thing we sorrow for is to be remedied, or it is not; if it is, why then do we spend the time in mourning, which should be spent in an active applying of remedies? But if it is not; then is our sorrow vain, as tending to no real effect. For no man can weep his father, or his friend, out of the grave, or mourn himself out of a bankrupt condition. But this spiritual sorrow is effectual to one of the greatest and highest purposes that mankind can be concerned in. It is a means to avert an impendent wrath, to disarm an offended Omnipotence; and even to fetch a soul out of the very jaws of hell; so that the end and consequence of

this sorrow sweetens the sorrow itself; and, as Solomon says, *in the midst of laughter, the heart is sorrowful*; so in the midst of sorrow here, the heart may rejoice; for while it mourns, it reads, that *those that mourn shall be comforted*; and so while the penitent weeps with one eye, he views his deliverance with the other. But then for the external expressions and vent of sorrow; we know that there is a certain pleasure in weeping; it is the discharge of a big and a swelling grief; of a full and a strangling discontent; and therefore he that never had such a burthen upon his heart, as to give him opportunity thus to ease it, has one pleasure in this world yet to come.—*Ibid.*

HE that prolongs his meals, and sacrifices his time, as well as his other conveniences, to his luxury, how quickly does he out-sit his pleasure! And then, how is all the following time bestowed upon ceremony and surfeit; till at length, after a long fatigue of eating, and drinking, and babbling, he concludes the great work of dining genteelly, and so makes a shift to rise from table, that he may lie down upon his bed; where after he has slept himself into some use of himself, by much ado he staggers to his table again, and there acts over the same brutish scene; so that he passes his whole life in a dozed condition between sleeping and waking, with a kind of drowsiness upon his senses; which, what pleasure it can be, is hard to conceive; all that is of it, dwells upon the tip of his tongue, and within the compass of his palate: a worthy prize for a man to purchase with the loss of his time, his reason, and himself.—*Ib.*

First of all they [the “new

lights,”] seize upon some text, from whence they draw something, (which they call a *doctrine*) and well may it be said to be *drawn* from the words; forasmuch as it seldom naturally flows from them. In the next place, they branch it into several heads; perhaps twenty, or thirty, or upwards. Whereupon, for the prosecution of these, they repair to some *trusty Concordance*, which never fails them, and by the help of that, they range six or seven scriptures under each head; which scriptures they prosecute one by one, enlarging upon one, for some considerable time, till they have spoiled it; and then that being done, they pass to another, which in its turn suffers accordingly. And these impertinent and unpremeditated enlargements they look upon as *the motions and breathings of the Spirit*, and therefore much beyond those *carnal ordinances of sense and reason*, supported by industry and study; and this they call a *saving way* of preaching, as it must be confessed to be a way to save much labour, and nothing else that I know of. * * * * But to pass from these indecencies to others, as little to be allowed in this sort of men, can any tolerable reason be given for those strange, new postures used by some in the delivery of the word? Such as *shutting the eyes, distorting the face, speaking through the nose*, which, I think, cannot so properly be called *preaching*, as *toning of a sermon*. Nor do I see, why the word may not be altogether as effectual for *the conversion of souls*, delivered by one who has the manners to look his auditory in the face, using his own countenance, and his own native voice, without straining it to a lamentable and doleful *whine*. * * * * It is clear therefore, that the men of this method have sullied the noble science of divinity, and can never warrant their practice.

either from religion or reason, or the rules of decent behaviour, nor yet from the example of the apostles, and least of all from that of our Saviour himself. For none surely will imagine, *that these men's speaking as never man spoke before, can pass for any imitation of him.*
—*Ib.*

shall come fully and clearly to understand ; so that even the apostles, the secretaries of heaven, might say, *We know in part, and we prophesy in part ; We now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.*—*Barrow.*

Divers notions not simply passing our capacity to know, we are not yet in condition to ken, by reason of our circumstances here, in this dark corner of things to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many disadvantages of attaining knowledge. He that is shut up in a close place, and can only peep through chinks, who standeth in a valley, and hath his prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with fogs, who hath but a dusky light to view things by, whose eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far, how can he discern things remote, minute or subtle, clearly and distinctly ? Such is our case ; our mind is pent up in the body, and looketh only through those clefts by which objects strike our sense ; its intuition is limited within a very small compass ; it resideth in an atmosphere of fancy, stuff with exhalations from temper, appetite, passion, interest ; its light is scant and faint (for sense and experience do reach only some few gross matters of fact, light infused, and revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary dispensation in definite measures) our ratiocination consequently from such principles, must be very short and defective ; nor are our minds ever thoroughly sound, or pure and defecate from prejudices : hence no wonder, that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great truths, or have but a glimmering notion of them, which we may, and hereafter

We are also incapable thoroughly to discern the ways of providence, from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men ; from our stupidity, our sloth, our temerity, our impatience, our impurity of heart, our perversness of will and affections : we have not the perspicacity to espy the subtle tracts, and secret reserves of divine wisdom ; we have not the industry, with steady application of mind, to regard and meditate on God's works ; we have not the temper and patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the accomplishment of his purposes ; we have not that *blessed purity of heart* which is requisite to the *seeing God* in his special dispensations, we have not that rectitude of will and government of our passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our conceit or humor ; such defects are observable in the best men, who therefore have misapprehended, have disrelished, have fretted and murmured at the proceedings of God : we might instance in *Job*, in *David*, in *Elias*, in *Jonah*, in the holy *apostles* themselves, by whose speeches and deportments in some cases, it may appear how difficult it is for us, who have *eyes of flesh* (as *Job* speaketh) and hearts too never quite freed of carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the dealings of God.

It is indeed a distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun, or cure, that we are apt to measure the equity and expedience of things according to our opinions and pas-

sions; affecting consequently to impose on God our silly imaginations as rules of his proceeding, and to constitute him the executioner of our sorry passions; what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: to our apprehensions every slight inconvenience is a huge calamity, every scratch of fortune is a ghastly wound; God, therefore, we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful bauble, every trivial accommodation is a matter of high consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him; and wail as children for want of a trifle. Are we soundly angry or inflamed with zeal? Then *fire must come down from heaven*, then thunderbolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden woe and vengeance are denounced: Are we pleased? Then showers of blessings must de-

scend on the heads, then floods of wealth must run into the laps of our favourites, otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his charge. We do beyond measure hate or despise some persons, and to those God must not afford any favour, any mercy, any forbearance, or time of repentance; we excessively admire or dote on others, and those God must not touch or cross; if he doth not proceed thus he is in danger to forfeit his authority: He must hardly be allowed to govern the world, in case he will not square his administrations to our fond conceit, or froward humour: hence no wonder, that men often are stumbled about providence; for God will not rule according to their fancy or pleasure (it would be a mad world if he should) neither indeed could he do so if he would, their judgments and their desires being infinitely various, inconsistent and repugnant.—*Ib.*

REVIEWS.

The Scoffer Admonished; being the Substance of two Sermons preached in Carr's Lane Meeting House, July 18th and August 1st. 1824. By J. A. JAMES, Birmingham. pp. 53.

THE sermons of different countries and ages indicate, perhaps better than any other species of writing, not excepting ecclesiastical history itself, the state of religion in those countries and ages. Not only are they faithful expositors of the piety, learning and diligence, or the impiety, ignorance and sloth of the incumbents of the sacred office; but they show the influence of truth or error on the mass of the community. They ex-

hibit the progress or decline of religion at different periods in the church, and its peculiar characteristics and modifications in different countries. A collection of sermons from the Christian era down to the present time, would afford a comprehensive view highly interesting and instructive, on this subject. We are not aware indeed that this could be done to a desirable extent from the want of records at the beginning. Had the discourses or rather the expositions of the earliest Christian teachers been published and preserved, it would constitute a body of testimony, of the most unexceptionable character, respecting the Church immediately succeeding the age of the apostles.

From this source we should learn the fervent, simple piety of primitive times; and as those times were, for the most part, exempt from the heresies which afterwards abounded, we should perceive the want of critical knowledge, and the comparative speculative laxity then prevalent, on the deeper mysteries of religion. From such a collection, it would appear, what subtilty of discussion and violent animosities obtained afterwards, in consequence of the heresies and divisions which distracted the Church, down to the period of the complete establishment of the Papal Hierarchy. We should ascertain the jargon of philosophy, the dominion of Aristotle in the Christian school, the childish conceits, the base superstition, the fierce fanaticism, and the almost universal corruption of faith and manners, which marked the ages that followed down to the Reformation. From that period to the present, we should notice the spirit of contest between the powers of darkness and the champions of the truth, the banded efforts of the enemies of God on the one hand, in diffusing atheism, infidelity, heresy, and licentiousness; and of the friends of God on the other, in opposing these errors, and in maintaining the interests of truth and righteousness. We should learn the various errors of different ages—the great points of attack or defence in theological controversy, and what subjects most interested the minds of men. We should discover in regard to the present era, the singular mixture of some of the best with some of the worst traits of any age,—the evangelical purity, benevolence, and religious excitement of primitive times—with the corruptions, selfishness, heresy, and licentiousness, of the dark ages. We should perceive the gross ignorance and the bright light which stand opposed to each other, and

which are marked out in deep and broad lines. All this and much more would appear from the sermons of different ages, could they be compared together.

Were we, moreover, to extend our researches, on this subject, into different countries, we might determine the particular characteristic traits as to the religion of those countries. We should discern and discriminate the deadly fanaticism of Spain—the weak superstitions of Italy—the gay infidelity of France—the critical coldness of Germany—the licentious formality of a portion of the Anglican church—the pure morality of Presbyterian Scotland, and the sober habits and disciplined piety of Congregational New England. The recorded labours of the pulpit would show these distinctions in the religious or irreligious character of different countries: and each country would be seen to possess some shades or features varying from those of every other.

The ministers of religion in their public ministrations either catch the manners of the times, or give a tone to those manners. Their discourses are founded on the notions, principles, duties, virtues, errors, or vices, that prevail—on the great changes that take place in the moral, and sometimes in the political world—on the state of the Church at large, or that division of it to which they are more immediately related; and in proportion to their faithfulness they expose the evil, and they commend and insist on the good. In proportion to their *ability*, connected with their faithfulness, they present a true and forcible picture of the religious condition of the community; and where they are stated pastors, of that of their own particular charges. In relation to the latter, it may be truly said, that their preaching is almost *necessarily appropriate*—hinged on the religious pe-

culiarity of their people, so that one can scarcely exchange labours with his next neighbour on the sabbath without omitting in his discourses, some representations, that he has reason to believe none but his own stated hearers would duly appreciate, or feel to be relevant. So unconscious is this adaptation of their public efforts to the state and wants of their congregations, that probably the history of their preaching, in most cases, would be the history of religion in their particular parishes. In looking over their manuscript sermons, they would perceive how these glowed with warmth, or were chilled by coldness, or at least failed in animation, though not perhaps in usefulness altogether, according as their hearers felt interested or otherwise, on the subject of their souls' salvation.

This spirit of adaptation evidently marks the Sermons, at the head of this article. It possesses all the interest of a reality; and if it indicates the same state of things in regard to England at large, that it does in respect to the particular place where it was preached, it must suggest many melancholy reflections to the Christian mind. The writer was evidently surrounded by scorers, and molested and perhaps fretted by their impieties. From the short preface to the Sermon, we should judge there was something peculiar in the effect produced, as well as in the occasion. "The outline of the following Sermon," he says, "was drawn nearly a month ago, and consequently before it was possible for the author, to anticipate the circumstances, that have lately occupied so much of the public attention in Birmingham. To these events the discourse bears no other relation whatever, than that of a coincidence, seasonable, it must be confessed, but altogether uncontrived. The author has said neither more nor less than he would have done at

any other time; and has published the sermon to convince his fellow-townsmen that he is neither afraid nor ashamed of giving the utmost publicity to his opinions, convinced as he is, that they are in accordance with the principles of that sacred volume, which by every one but an infidel must be acknowledged to be the only arbiter in all questions of a moral and religious nature."

The author, the Rev. J. A. James, has deserved well of the religious public in a very valuable little work not long since published, entitled, "*The Christian Father's Present, to his Children*," a book which we regard as among the best of the class to which it belongs, and which we could wish were in the possession of every family whether it had any juvenile members or not. In that work he appears to be (and the discourses exhibit the same character) a good, zealous, sound, and evangelical man. Certainly we should not be apt to mistake him for another reverend gentleman in the same town (probably there are others such) who, as one that resides there and is acquainted with him tells us—"dances at quadrille parties, appears on the grand Stand at horse races, frequents the theatre, and sometimes gets not a little, but a great deal the worse for liquor." If one of the latter description were to preach a sermon on scoffing at religion, he might perhaps say that which is correct; but he would be more apt to exemplify that which is wrong. The scoffer would probably appear in the preacher, even while he should be eloquently admonishing his peccant hearers relative to this sin.

The Sermon before us is an English copy, nor do we know that there is a reprinted edition of it in this country, or that there will be one. Our readers, however, will, we think, not be disoblighd by a brief analysis and few extracts by

means of which they may learn the substance of it, as well as be impressed by the truths it presents on a very important and practicable subject. It may gratify also their curiosity to know how a topic of this pointed character is handled by a preacher in a populous town in our mother country. Nor is it the least of our object to improve the occasion afforded, by some seasonable remarks in reference to the awful crime as committed among us.

The author's text is 2 Pet. iii. 3d. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.* After a neat introduction, his object is announced in the following passage. "As this sin, [viz. scoffing, or scorning,] "is lamentably common in the present age, I have thought necessary to call your attention to the subject, and to put you on your guard against its pernicious influence and impious attacks." This purpose he executes in a number of remarks or heads of discourse, not previously stated but following one another, after a regular, though perhaps not strictly logical method in all respects. These general topics are four in number. The first gives a representation of the vice itself and traces it through its various forms and modes of operation. The next considers the causes of scoffing. The third exhibits the characters of this vice. And the last describes the punishment of the scorner. Under the first head, after setting forth the professed atheistical scoffer and the deistical scoffer, he comes to another character which he distinguishes from the latter, and which he describes in the following manner.

But there are many, who, though they have all the malignity of deism, have not its desperate hardihood. They are infidels without avowing it; they despise revelation without professing

to reject it; they laugh at it but do not, because they cannot, argue against it. In the grand conflict between christianity and infidelity, they carry on a sort of guerrilla warfare. They have neither skill nor accoutrements, which can gain them admission to the line of well disciplined troops, but they can skirmish, and it is admitted that in a certain way do much execution. I mean the men who under a profession of general respect for revelation, are ever busying themselves in finding out, exposing, and ridiculing, what their shallow and unsanctified minds imagine to be difficulties, absurdities, and objections. How will they divert for hours at a time the circle in which they move with witty, ironical, or ludicrous remarks, perhaps upon some of the scripture narratives, or some of the scripture characters. The account of Jonah and the fish; and the sins of David, with other things of a similar nature are converted by them into matter of endless ridicule. Two topics there are of fearful mystery, of awful gloom, and of dreadful reality, necessarily connected with revealed truth which have been employed, perhaps more than any others by such scoffers, to season their mirth, and to give a relish to their sinful jokes: and these are the state of punishment prepared for the wicked, and the existence of the devil. Hell, whether it mean according to the views of some, a purgatorial fire, a disciplinary chastisement, or according to the Scripture a state of eternal torments; and satan, whether he be a real existence, or only a figurative personification of the evil principle, are subjects of merriment and diversion. Unhappily the monkish legends of Popery, prurient as they are, with all that can shock the reason, and offend the sober piety of the enlightened Christian, have furnished so many absurd, ludicrous, and monstrous stories on these appalling themes, that the most terrific and dreadful of all possible topics, have become the most sportive of all.—pp. 3, 9.

After describing atheistic, and deistic, and this last, which may be called semi-deistic scoffing, he adverts to another form of this vice, and that is, as he expresses himself, "to pitch upon the extrava-

gances and imperfections of good men, and to expose them to public ridicule and contempt." Concerning this he remarks as follows.

It may be, their imperfections are only eccentricities, mere dust upon the petals of the flower, but not a canker at its roots, which candour would overlook or conceal, in consideration of the genuine excellence with which they are associated; and which charity would never ridicule, lest the piety with which they are united should partake of the derision. It is a very easy achievement to make corrupt minds laugh at the most admirable qualities, when they happen to be connected with even trivial eccentricity; for he who laughs at the garment, will soon be led by an easy transition to despise the wearer, however respectable. But how hateful is the malignancy, which delights to throw all the valuable and praiseworthy parts of the character, into the shade of one ludicrous trait!—pp. 13, 14.

He speaks of one other miserable device to which many have had recourse, and that is to select the absurdities of fanaticism, and the hollow pretences of piety, as they have been exhibited in some false professors, and thus to raise a prejudice against all spiritual religion. Concerning this practice he makes the following sensible remarks.

We are told it is not rational piety they deride, but only the disgusting excesses of enthusiasm and insincerity. This mask, however, is too ill constructed to conceal the visage, and this veil too thin to disguise the form of the scorner. Hypocrisy in any thing needs no effort employed against it, to render it hateful; there being no vice which is more generally or justly abhorred: and as for fanaticism, like the *ignis fatuus*, it may be left to itself, for it will soon expire without any effort to extinguish it. Besides, fanaticism is a term so undefined, that it is a difficult matter to regulate its application; and on the other hand, the phrase "rational piety" is with those who use it, like the bed of Procrustes, to which every thing must be

fitted by violence, either by being stretched or lopped. pp. 14, 15.

With a rather loose reference to the terms of his first head, he next speaks of the place and time at which the practice of scoffing is indulged in. Here he enumerates the *theatre*, the social circle, and many of the publications, and much of the periodical literature of the present day. We extract one passage under the second article here mentioned as possessing rather a fine pathetic cast.

Religion, like her divine author when he was led into Pilate's hall, to be a laughing stock to the Roman soldiers, is introduced only to furnish merriment for the company. One calls her an impostor, practising her arts on the credulity of mankind; another holds up the vices of her false disciples as chargeable upon her; a third tells a ludicrous anecdote of one of her sincere and honourable votaries. Then derided by all, defended by none, with no one to speak on her behalf, and not permitted to speak for herself, she stands, like the man of sorrows, a silent object of derision, the swearer's jest, the drunkard's song, yet majestic still in grief, and dignified amidst surrounding scorn. How much of tavern alehouse mirth is derived from this impious source. What a supply of merriment would be cut off from the sons of Belial if religion, and all the subjects connected with it, were suddenly, by some mysterious power operating upon their mind, either forgotten or dreaded. p. 17.

In enumerating under the second head of discourse the causes of scoffing, he resolves them into *pride*—a prevailing and indecent levity of mind—a silly affectation of novelty, combined with a wish to be thought superior to the terrors of superstition—the power of fashion, and the contagion of evil company—inability to attack religion in any other way—indulgences of lusts according to the idea intimated in the text,—and finally, fear united with dislike. On the

consideration respecting the indulgence of lusts, the following passage is worthy of notice.

The truths and the precepts of revelation are enemies to pride of intellect, and depravity of heart; and it is matter of little surprise, that they who cannot be reconciled to humility and purity, should scorn the system which enforces such virtues. As children in a school, who have most to fear from a master's displeasure, are the most ready to treat him with ridicule behind his back, and as the whip will be generally treated with most merriment by those who are most in danger of its lashes; so they who have most reason to dread from religion, will be more forward than others to scorn it, and they who are in the greatest danger of the quenchless fire, will like other madmen, be the first to sport with its flames. Religion frowns upon every sin; rebukes, accuses, and condemns every sinner. A man cannot swear or take the name of God in vain, or break the sabbath, or indulge in the least act of uncleanness, but this representative of God in our world, censures the sin, and threatens the sinner. Like the angel of the Lord resisting the hireling prophet in his path, it opposes itself to the transgressor in his way, and with a drawn sword and a voice of thunder, exclaims, proceed at thy peril! Interrupted, perplexed and resisted in his iniquitous career, rendered uneasy and less capable of enjoying his lusts; the sinner becomes angry, and like a rude youth impeded in his lawless sport, he derides his monitor and abuses him with ill names.—pp. 26, 27.

There is something *clever*, according to the English meaning of this term, in what the author says of the scorner's fear.

The scorner secretly trembles at the idea of a God, and of a judgment to come. In spite of himself he fears that there may be a reality in it, and if there be, what is to become of him. The poor creature, like a scared child whistling as he passes through a churchyard to keep up his courage, or laughing at the story of a ghost to conceal the palpitations of his heart, ridicules

religion to allay if possible the rising alarms of his own conscience, and to disengage himself from the terrors of his own affrighted imagination. May I not appeal to some who read this for the truth of what I say, when I affirm that the sneering countenance is oftentimes the impious mask of a cowardly heart, and of a trembling conscience.—p. 28.

In exhibiting, under the third head of discourse, the character of this vice, he speaks of it as irrational—as rude and uncivil—as a cruel and inhuman sin—as a most hardening vice—as impious in the sight of God beyond all description—as a contagious and injurious vice.

On the hardening character of this vice he observes,

It marks a dreadful progress in the career of sin, manifests a peculiar boldness of iniquity, and plainly proves that the transgressor is still going forward to greater obduracy of heart. That man who can allow himself the liberty of scoffing at religion as a whole, or any part of it, who can allow himself to sneer at the righteous, or divert others with any thing pertaining to their character or conduct, has a conscience already partially benumbed, and which will soon be seared as with a hot iron. Nothing so rapidly closes the heart as this; nothing closes so fast the avenues of moral perception, nor so completely petrifies the spiritual sensibilities. The mocker will be soon past feeling. Neither the terrors of justice, nor the loveliness of mercy make any impression on his heart: to admonish him is almost a hopeless task. The sacred writers speak of a scorner as *almost* irreclaimable. The Greek version renders the word scorner, by a word which signifies incorrigible.—pp. 33, 34.

On the punishment of the scorner, under the last head of discourse, he has a few pithy sentences respecting the remorse sometimes felt by the scorner in this life, or on the bed of death. But he dwells chiefly on the scorner's punishment in eternity. After quo-

ting several passages of scripture on this subject, he observes,

Do you wish to know what is included in these fearful denunciations? It is not in my power completely to unfold them. All that is contained in that fearfully comprehensive, but commonly abused word *hell*; the wrath of God; remorse of conscience, and eternal despair, are the chief ingredients in this cup of torment. How angry is God with such persons now, and how heavily will he inflict his wrath hereafter! I cannot conceive of one character, with whom Jehovah will be so awfully severe as the scoffer; his is the loftiest height of vice, and his will be the lowest depth of punishment. God's patience in bearing with such impious creatures is wonderful; and his justice in punishing them will be in proportion. Oh let me be any thing in the day of judgment, rather than the scoffer. He will be no mock-er there. No. I see him hanging down his head like a bulrush; the haughtiness of his spirit is all gone: trembling with consternation and dismay, there he stands the object of divine scorn and indignation. His wit, his irony, his mimicry, avail him nothing there. He cannot play the buffoon amidst the fearful solemnities of the last judgment. Oh no: the poor trembling creature finds it a far different thing to see God, than to speak of him. He is now at the bar of the Judge of the whole earth, waiting his eternal destiny with certain and dreadful presages of what it will be. He is no longer surrounded with a circle of applauding auditors who laugh at his wit; he no longer hears the inspiring chorus of folly: no, no; he is before the tribunal of the God whom he has insulted: on one side he sees the men looking on him with horror, whose ruin he accelerated by his scoffs; and on the other, the holy objects on whom his scorn was vented. Aye, and how is he confounded at the latter. Every thing on that day will combine to fill him with consternation; yet, methinks neither the voice of the archangel, nor the trump of God, nor the dissolution of the elements, nor the face of the Judge himself, from which the heavens will flee away, will be so dismaying and terrible as the sight of the

saints of the most high God, whom having spurned, ridiculed, and mocked in the days of their humiliation, he will then behold with amazement, united with their Lord, covered with his glory, and seated upon his throne. How will he be astonished to see them encompassed with so much majesty and loaded with so much honor! How will he cast down his eyes in their presence! How will he curse his folly in treating them with so much ridicule and forming such an inadequate idea of their principles and character!

And then who shall tell the secrets of his prison, or conceive of what the scorner shall endure in the dark world of hell! There will be no saint near him *there*, on whom to utter the effusions of his ridicule; no piety shall there offend his eyes; far as heaven is from hell shall these be removed out of his way. He has only to wait a little longer, till he has reached the destiny on which his crime is impelling him, and he will inhabit a world, where the hated, persecuted form of piety will trouble him no longer. Will he assuage his own agonies, or divert the companions of his misery with merry jokes upon the *saints*? Not one flash of wit will for a moment relieve the darkness of eternal night; not one sally of humor resist the oppression of eternal despair. Hell will no longer be a subject of merriment when its torments are really felt: the burning lake, when the soul is plunged in its fiery billows, will be found something else and worse than a mere scene of diversion for a wretched imagination to sport in: and devils, when the spirit is subjected to their tyranny as tormentors, will be no longer regarded, as the mere images of appalling recreation. In the bottomless pit the scorner shall learn, if he learn not before, that there is truth in the bible, and reality in religion. Yes, the recollection of those jests and those witticisms, those drolleries and those anecdotes, intended to make piety appear ridiculous, and the saints to appear contemptible, will fill him with torture a thousand times more intolerable, than the venom of serpents and the stings of scorpions.—pp. 39—43.

In concluding the representation above, which finishes his sermon as

far as to the application, there is a most sublime and affecting accommodation of the words which our Saviour uttered in his last moments. He is addressing the scorner :

Beware, thou art playing a desperate game ; thy soul is the stake, thy loss is certain, and hell will be the consequence. The objects of thy attack are open to *conviction*, but are invulnerable to scorn. They have no prejudice which fortifies them against argument ; but against the shafts of ridicule they are armed at every point, and calmly and silently leaving you to exhaust your quiver of its last and weakest arrow, will abandon your harmless and imbecile weapons to publish your defeat, and then amidst the consciousness of innocence and victory, content themselves with saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.—p. 43.

His application is in the old fashioned manner. "By way of improvement" he says—"1. Let no man think the worse of religion, or of any of its doctrines, because some are so bold as to despise them."

"2. I shall lay down some means of securing ourselves and our religion against the attacks of the scorner."

"3. If however it be impossible to ward off the attacks of scorn, and to avert the scoffs of the profane, then bear them with unruffled meekness."

Under the second head of the application relative to the means of security, there are several particulars. As his rules are marked by much good sense, they may be here mentioned. One which he lays down is "An enlightened and enlarged acquaintance with the evidences of the truth of revealed religion, and of those particular doctrines, duties, and practices, which we believe it contains." Another is "The feeling of that courage and decision which enable us unblushingly to avow our attachments to

religion, or any of its opinions or practices in the face either of ridicule or rage." Another is "The cultivation of the disposition, and practice of all the duties of a holy life." The fourth is "Not suffering ridicule to intrude itself into matters of controversy betwixt Christians themselves." The last is "A caution as to indulging the most distant approach to this impious and injurious practice in our social intercourse, our habitual conversation, and our remarks upon each other." The last named rule he illustrates by the following appropriate and well timed remarks.

Let us cherish to the uttermost that awe which warns us how we touch a holy thing. The name of God should never be uttered but with reverence. Religion should never be introduced but with respect. A light and frivolous manner of speaking on sacred subjects is very criminal ; how much more that profane practice of adapting the inspired language of Scripture, to the ordinary occurrences of life. A Mahometan never picks up by chance a fragment of the koran, without marks of reverent respect, and yet some professing Christians employ the words of the Holy Ghost, to season a jest, or give a smartness to a repartee. If there be any truth in religion, it is the most solemn thing in the world ; and as such let it be treated, especially by those who profess to know its nature, and submit to its claims.

The discourse, as a foreign production, may deserve a critical remark or two ; but we cannot stop long for this purpose. It is marked by earnestness and sincerity, and is bold, severe, and perhaps pointed, in reference to the sort of people with whom the preacher was dealing. He may never have read a New England sermon ; and yet his production differs not so much from a New England sermon, that we should be greatly disinclined to own it. Still there is a certain something—a sort of manner and

tone about it, not easily to be described, which internally demonstrates it to be the pulpit effort of a foreigner. Compared with the common run of sermons among us, it is perhaps less compact, less formed and modelled by rules of art, more loose, and even more verbose; but it excels in sprightliness, in originality, in copiousness of illustration, in variety of matter. We are not certain that it does not contain too much matter for one sermon, or even for two. The various rules under the second inference, duly explained and enforced, might alone suffice for one sermon. It is wise, so far as depth of impression is concerned, not to include too much discussion, or to go over too wide a field in a single sermon. It is wise, whatever may be the subject, not to say too much upon it, and to stop when it becomes necessary to repeat what has been said before.

In regard to the dreadful sin, on which the author has so seasonably animadverted, we have a few thoughts further to suggest of our own. It is perhaps needless to remark, that its immediate and abundant source is the depravity of the heart; and that in its more matured stages, it evinces a hardened indifference to religion, and a fearful flagitiousness of principle, if not of practice. It is perhaps needless to say also, that when carried to a certain extreme extent, it nearly or quite ensures the damnation of those who are addicted to it. As committed among us, it demands the serious consideration of the ministers of religion. Pungently and awfully should it be reprov'd, and as often as occasions render this measure necessary. Unhappily the occasions are too frequent, and probably increasing in the land. The depravity of sinners, and our growing imitation of foreign practices, aided by our free institutions and free press, our tolerant habits

and entire equality, are connected with many offences on this subject, notwithstanding the generally healthy tone of public morals and religion. Both in private circles, and in the periodicals of the day, much that is highly objectionable on this ground, is said and written.

There is one subject we would particularly bring into view, in regard to which the scoffers of the times have vented their malice, and in regard to which they will be peculiarly apt to offend. That subject pertains to revivals of religion. As these have been, and are still frequent, and are doubtless connected with some abuses, it will be natural for the enemies of piety, to make this a sort of watch-word or rallying point. And already, indeed, has the stream of sarcasm and invective begun to pour through the land. The pretext of these attacks—these scoffs and sneers and bitter aspersions, is furnished by the abuses which grow out of revivals of religion; and truly none should countenance so dreadful an evil. The ministers of the gospel, as some have already done, should raise the warning voice, and guard their hearers against the devices of satan in corrupting revivals. It is their duty, and the duty of all good men and citizens, to expose an abuse of so eminent a mercy as a genuine revival of religion. But then an occasion is afforded on the part of enemies, in connexion with so unhappy a perversion of heaven's best blessing, to denounce the whole system, and to calumniate its supporters. An occasion is afforded for them, we fear, to speak even against the blessed Being—the holy Agent, who, we believe, is employed in producing all pure religious excitement. If the friends of the system are not sufficiently vigilant, and the tendency to abuse an irregularity is not seasonably checked, the Christian community among us, will, to all human appearance be

thrown back at length, to that state of religious apathy, which preceded the era of these remarkable effusions of the Spirit upon our churches. We would not excite unreasonable alarm, but we are constrained to say, that Christians have perhaps been too confident, that a glorious career—that many days of brightness were immediately before them, without anticipating the possible intervention of a very different state of things—the withdrawalment of these high and heavenly influences. Who knows what reverses are necessary in order to impart to the friends of Christ deeper humility—a more impressive sense of dependence,—and to put to the test the genuineness of that faith, which so many of late have professed. If we are not mistaken, there are no doubtful indications of gathering hostility to the best of causes, and that not merely under the decent disguises hitherto adopted, but in direct, decided, and open attacks. If we do not miss our reluctant calculations, judging from the existence of certain papers in our land, the battle even with infidelity, is to be fought over again, and spiritual dangers of no ordinary magnitude, are to thicken around the church of God, for a time. We may say at the least, that it is the part of wisdom, to be on our guard against these foes, and to gird ourselves up manfully to the contest, should it become necessary.

Hannam's Pulpit Assistant ; containing three hundred Outlines, or Skeletons of Sermons : chiefly extracted from various authors. With an Essay on the composition of a Sermon, complete in three volumes. First American from the 4th London Edition.

[Pulpit assistants, and script and

lithographic sermons, are very little in vogue, we trust, in this country. Nevertheless, since an enterprising publisher has presumed the fact to be otherwise, and upon the strength of this presumption has ventured to reprint five English *octodecimos* of skeletons,—a desperate enterprise we hope,—and since, especially, a worthy correspondent has looked at these skeletons and sent us his reflections over them, we have concluded to give them a place in our Review,—writing, however, this prefatory paragraph as a sort of disclaimer of any imputation on the clerical fraternity which, in the minds of some, such a book, or such a notice of it, might seem to carry with it. We believe—we are sure—that these “labor-saving” volumes will meet with no prevalent demand in this country, however welcome they may be to a certain description of clergymen in the land of pulpit skeletons. We say *labor-saving* volumes, for such they profess to be, though the fact is doubtless otherwise. For a borrower of thoughts is like a borrower of tools : both spend much time abroad which might be much more *economically*, in the long run, as well as much more pleasantly and effectively occupied at home.]

THIS work, it seems, “has met with general acceptance from the religious world,” and has passed through four editions in England. Its general design, as stated in the preface to the fourth London edition, “is to suggest ideas to those preachers whose situation renders it impracticable for them to peruse those works, from which a great part of them are extracted ; being fully persuaded that if read with prayer and meditation, they will be a service to themselves and a blessing to others.”—It is also said they are principally designed to promote the usefulness of young ministers.

We doubt not the design of the compiler of these volumes was good. The authors from whom he has chiefly taken these skeletons are of a high character, and the sentiments contained in them are evangelical, many of them are taken from old authors, and are rather outlines of treatises, than plans of sermons: of course they are too prolix, and contain quite too many subdivisions. But we seriously question whether they will not prove a detriment rather than an "assistance to the pulpit." Ministers like other men are naturally indolent; as they have a weekly task to perform, they are disposed to defer it as long as possible. If by any unusual pressure of business, or unexpected interruption, they are straitened for time to prepare for the sabbath, it is peculiarly grateful to find a text and an "outline of a sermon" made to their hands. This so much relieves their minds from distressing anxiety, that they will be extremely apt to neglect *every* opportunity to be furnished for the duties of the sanctuary. They will fail to pick up the little "scraps of time" that lie scattered through the week, and a habit of procrastination, if not of indolence will be formed. What has proved *very* convenient under *peculiar* circumstances, will be likely to be resorted to under *ordinary* circumstances. We have very serious objections against a clergyman's *owning* such a work as Hannam's Pulpit Assistant, or Simeon's Skeletons, for, if he *own* them he will *use* them. We believe many a preacher has been almost ruined by these works.—We will state some of the evils that arise from a use of other men's plans in composing sermons. In *our own* country preaching other men's sermons has ever been, and we trust, ever will be, regarded dishonorable to the clerical profession, and injurious to the interests of religion.

In the first place; Composing sermons from other men's plans, or using a book of Skeletons leads to indolence. We have already hinted at this. But a minister who is conscientious in the discharge of his duties, may be injured by this practice. Let us look for a moment at the situation of a minister, who is settled over an extensive congregation. He will necessarily be subjected to many calls from strangers and from his own society—visits to the sick and the afflicted, and parochial visits will occupy no inconsiderable portion of his time. *While* visiting, he will feel, from the pleasure and the benefit of it, that he could profitably spend his whole time in that important part of a minister's duty. The sabbath approaches. Two sermons are to be prepared: before he is aware of it, half of the week has elapsed. With just sufficient time, to compose two sermons hastily, with only enough to write one sermon well, he begins his task—calls, and interruptions occur to embarrass and perplex him—he resorts to his "Pulpit Assistant" and gets through with his two sermons. Now it is easier to visit than to study—and it is easier to write a sermon from a full skeleton than to arrange a method and fill it out, from original reflection. The ease and readiness with which we contract habits are proverbial. The practice of deferring to the latter part of the week the necessary preparation for the sabbath is a fruitful source of evil to ministers, who, like others, too often suffer themselves to become the sport of circumstances, and who accomplish only as much as they are obliged to. These courses combined operate to the prejudice of good habits, and induce many good ministers to resort to 'pulpit assistants,' when they ought to be thrown upon their own resources.

Secondly; The use of published Skeletons destroys originality, and

impairs the native energy of the mind. The intellectual powers are strengthened by exercise. If we take the ideas of other men instead of working out a train of thought for ourselves, *we* are losers, whatever others may gain. A minister *can* preach and exhibit truth, and thus do good with very little mental labour—a doctrinal sermon can easily be made out by citing texts and commenting on them—but a minister if he would be extensively and permanently useful ought to improve his *own* mind while he is improving others. There is extempore writing as well as extempore speaking. The mere mechanism of filling two or three sheets of paper is nothing, if the intellectual and moral energies are not summoned to the business of preparing a message. If originality of thought and expression should be studied any where, it is in sermon writing, where the sameness of the subjects, their frequent recurrence, the regularity of the routine of duty take so much from the interest. We are no advocates for affected originality. But tameness on a trite subject is like tediousness, which, Johnson says, is “an evil that perpetuates itself.” The originality we contend for, will in most cases be obtained by application. Every man, who has requisite talents to preach the gospel, can, by dint of labor and close thought, bring out of his treasure things *new* as well as old. We were particularly pleased with that trait in the character of Thomas Spencer: he desired a friend of his to send to him a printed sermon, but he would not see it, till he had finished one he was writing on the same text. The remarks of Cowper, on imitation, are worthy of remembrance, and may be applied as well to ministers as to poets. “I reckon it,” he says, “among my principal advantages, as a composer of verses, that I have not read an

English poet these thirteen years, and but one these twenty years. Imitation even of the best models is my aversion; it is servile and mechanical; a trick that has enabled many to usurp the name of author, who could not have written at all, if they had not written upon the pattern of somebody indeed original. But when the ear and the taste have been much accustomed to the manner of others, it is almost impossible to avoid it: and we imitate in spite of ourselves, just in proportion as we admire.” One of the most impressive preachers of our acquaintance long since resolved to read no books of sermons lest he should insensibly become an imitator of some favorite author.

The effect is equally disastrous upon the native energy of the mind. This, if properly cultivated, is capable of almost any degree of improvement and expansion. The mind is like a bed of native ore, or rich mineral, the further it is explored, and the deeper you dig, the greater the treasure and the more valuable the material. Let a man ascertain the *bent* of his mind, or as it is generally termed, the character of his genius, (or more properly speaking,) let him find out, where his power lies, and then let him apply himself accordingly, and he will need no “pulpit assistant”—such a thing would only be a trammel. It requires some time for a pious, reserved man, to obtain sufficient knowledge of himself, a sufficient confidence in his own abilities, to venture upon an exhibition of his talents before others. This consciousness of ignorance of general topics, and deficiency of theological knowledge, leads young ministers to read extensively before they commence writing a sermon—a practice than which nothing is more injurious and embarrassing. If one wishes to stir up the gift that is in him, let him pray, let him meditate, let him peruse some finely conceived and

ably executed piece as far from the subject in hand as possible, that he may bring to his work, a mind free and unclogged, and clear as the mountain air. We have often heard sermons from good men, that were excellent, plain, and evangelical, but they did not bear sufficient marks of *labour* of thought. The native powers of the mind did not appear to have been *bent* upon them. There was not that bold, vigorous, and manly current of thought running through them, that would be visible if a mind well stored and powerful, were put in requisition, and *sufficient time* were taken to *work out* the plan and the execution. They appeared too mechanical, too much as though a given surface must be written over, and not that so many ideas must be compressed into a given compass. We think many good preachers would correct this appearance by just taking their Bibles and concordance, and sitting down to a sermon without ever looking into a book till it was finished. In this way, these sparklings of genius and flights of fancy, that give interest and even force to truth, would be elicited.

Thirdly. The use of printed skeletons prevents improvement. In the same proportion as they prevent close and intense thinking, they retard intellectual improvement. Every clergyman ought to read McIntosh's "Study of the Law," and Burder's "Mental Discipline."

Let two young men of equal talents and advantages, commence together the duties of the ministry. Let one use other men's skeletons occasionally, and read every thing he can find on the subject of the sermons he is about to compose, and write with his table filled with books open before him, and let the other *think out* his sermons and compose them in his own strength, (we mean not of course, a leaning

to his own understanding, or a neglect of prayer and dependence upon the Spirit of God; but we refer to his *own* strength, in opposition to aid from other *men*;) and in ten years there will be a vast difference in the intellectual stature and breadth of the two. The one will *rise*, the other will be stationary—or he will lose the freshness and fervor of his first efforts. Are there not numerous melancholy instances in proof of this? Have there not been cases, where young men, who stood high in the theological seminary and who have given by their first sermons great promise of eminence and usefulness, have sunk down to an inglorious level? After six or ten years of labour and preaching, they have not been able to excel their earliest productions.

There are other causes that operate to impede the progress of a minister in the path of honorable fame. In the country, and we may say in the city perhaps with more truth, the generality of his hearers are not capable of appreciating high intellectual effort. In many congregations there are *none*, whose intelligence and accomplishments, will operate as a subordinate stimulus to great mental improvement. They are satisfied as to the talents of their minister, and are pleased with his preaching. He has no confidential friend who will give him a critical opinion: he has however many injudicious ones who are always filling his ears with flattery. No wonder that a minister in such circumstances should relax. Very few have energy and principle enough to rise above every deadening influence, and task their powers to the utmost in their weekly ministrations. We recollect one of our ablest theological professors observed to us many years since that "perhaps it was not best to put forth every exertion in writing all our sermons, but a great

effort should be made at least once in four weeks. We thought the remark judicious, and worthy of remembrance.

How often do we hear of ministers being dismissed in the meridian of life, who travel through the country in search of a place of settlement. They have gone on in an even, monotonous course, a dead level, for many years, till they have failed to excite any interest and have lost their hold upon the hearts of the people and they are dismissed. Such men have fairly rusted out. Now their complaints of the number of ministers, and the difficulties of a location are to be received with many grains of allowance. Had they been industrious (not to labor with their hands but with their heads and hearts,) they would have been held in requisition to the very close of life. A minister must not depend upon popular favor, but under God, upon intellectual and moral power. A "growing man" need fear no changes. If a minister is faithful and conscientious in feeding and guiding the flock of Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls will provide labour and conveniences enough for him.

There is a period, however, in the history of every faithful minister that is peculiarly trying and painful. It occurs usually after a settlement of ten or twelve years. If he has been studious and diligent in his calling, he will have gone over all the great topics, and have gained his points. His influence will be at its height. His strength has been laid out. Then comes the trial of his faith and piety. He is in danger of relaxing. He experiences a feeling that resembles slack water at the turn of tide: he fails to interest his hearers as he has done: his influence he discovers to be on the wane.

Then, if he is not called in providence to leave, and a new impulse is not given, by entering upon

a new field, he must return to the labours and studies of his youth. He must break up his sermons, cast the whole of his materials into the furnace, the ore must be melted and wrought over anew. If there be not a spring given to his mind, and an impulse imparted to his energies, he will sink down into an inefficient, powerless ministry, and he will linger on, with little comfort to himself, or interest to his people.

No professional man ought ever to suffer his mind to lie fallow. Even to old age, he ought to keep before him some object of commanding interest, which will put all his powers in requisition.

Fourthly; But we have another serious objection against using other men's plans of sermons. This is not an unfrequent thing. It is common for clergymen to make a species of exchange. This is doubtless allowable to a certain extent; but after all we must say we consider it a species of deception. The people expect a minister to preach his *own* sermons. Now, whatever labour may have been bestowed upon the filling up, a sermon written after a full skeleton is *not* the minister's own. It is said, when the plan is formed and the introduction written, the sermon is half done. If there is any truth in this, it proves the justice of our remark, that a minister cannot say it is strictly *his* sermon, if he has adopted another's plan. A minister in doing it, will always feel that he is doing violence to his conscience. Let two sermons be written upon the same plan, if it be original and ingenious, by two men of the same school, and what will be the impression upon the *same* audience? This proves conclusively to *us* that it is morally wrong. We know in saying this, we expose ourselves to the remarks, and perhaps strictures of many very good men; but we must beg the privi-

lege of giving our opinion. It surely cannot be *wrong* for a minister to make the *whole* of his sermon from the bible and his own resources; it is *wise* as well as Christian to avoid the appearance of evil. Purity of conscience, consciousness of integrity, and uprightness will more than compensate for any closeness of application, or fatigue of exertion that may be requisite to perform the duties of the ministry. The time is coming when ministers will preach more without writing. A man with a well disciplined mind, and of industrious habits, will soon acquire a facility of extemporaneous speaking, that will be more effective than preaching written sermons. Reading sermons is not a *natural* way of preaching. On this subject, however, every one must judge for himself, and adopt the method which, on the whole, is

best calculated to accomplish the greatest good.

These are some of the objections we have to the use of any "pulpit assistant." A further object we had in view in offering these remarks was to prepare the way for some brief observations on the history of the pulpit; the characters of the preachers of the gospel in the several ages of the church; the comparative effect of doctrinal and moral preaching; and the general subject of sermonizing.

[What the writer had to say within this part of his plan, as it was not naturally connected with the foregoing remarks though valuable in itself, we have already printed in a separate article, which may be found at page 337 of the current volume.]

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTELLIGENCE.

Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, which will make two volumes in quarto, is now in the press.

This work will contain nearly eighty thousand words; and form the most copious vocabulary of the language ever published.

In the etymological department, the affinities of words will be given in *twenty-two* languages throughout; with many affinities in *five* other languages.

The correct definitions of the English Dictionaries are retained, but many of them rendered more precise and technical. To these will be added many thousand significations which are not found in any English Dictionary of the kind.

The common orthography of words is retained, except in cases where the original and proper orthography has been mistaken, and in cases where alterations have been necessary to reduce classes of words to uniformity. It is a reproach to the authors of such

works that no one of them is consistent with himself; nor is there one English Dictionary which is not marked by frequent inconsistencies.

The pronunciation of words will be given according to the general usage of the educated classes of society in England and the United States. The author has visited England for the purpose of ascertaining the real state of the language in that country, and he has an advantage, which no other orthoepist has enjoyed, of knowing perfectly from personal observation, the actual usage in both hemispheres. He has ascertained that for half a century past the people of this country have had imposed on them, books called *standards* of *pronunciation*, which were never regarded as authorities in England, such as Sheridan's and Walker's Dictionary—many of whose peculiarities are not according to English usage, and which are received obsequiously in this country to the immense injury of elegant pronunciation.

Already the pronunciation of many of our people of the higher classes, is so corrupt, that they could not appear in genteel society in England without being exposed to derision.

This Dictionary will explain the peculiar uses of words in this country, which have grown out of our peculiar civil and political institutions. Many words have a sense annexed to them in this country which is absolutely necessary here, but which the English do not well understand, and cannot explain.

In citing authorities, American authors of reputation are placed on a footing with British authors; and the names of Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jay, Madison, Marshall, Ramsay, Dwight, Belknap, Hamilton, Trumbull, Ames, Hare, Silliman, Cleaveland, Walsh, Buckminster, Irving, and many others will be found on the same page with the names of Clarendon, Hooker, Boyle, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, Davy and Jameson.

The introduction to this work will contain a history of the languages of the Shemitic and Japhetic families; with critical observations on their structure. The investigation into the origin of languages has developed some facts and principles not generally known, which, if they should be found correct, will be materially useful in elucidating the original languages of the Scriptures.

Goodrich's Greek Grammar.—The fourth edition of this work, with additions and improvements, is in press

at the office of the Christian Spectator.

Scriptural Geology.—We have seen a notice of the publication of a work in two volumes, with the above title, or Geological Phenomena consistent only with the Literal Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture, upon the subjects of the Creation and Deluge, in answer to Cuvier's Essay on the Theory of the Earth, and Professor Buckland's Theory of the Caves. The writer undertakes to demonstrate, both upon Scriptural and physical principles, that there is not a fossil bone or a fossil shell in existence that can be proved to be more ancient than the Noahic Deluge.

Our countryman, Mr. William C. Woodbridge, has been elected a corresponding Member of the Geographical Society of Paris, on the nomination of the Baron Humboldt, so distinguished for his researches in South America.

New Invention.—Mr. Richard P. Morgan, of Stockbridge Mass. has invented a Railway Carriage, which so reduces the friction that one horse can draw fifty tons on a level road with perfect ease. The invention has been tested by actual experiment. A pound weight was suspended over a pulley, and attached to the carriage, which moved quickly seven hundred pounds. The friction is overcome at the axles by means of four additional wheels which operate as rollers on the ground axle, while the friction wheels move round but four times in going one mile.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

RELIGIOUS.

The Essentials of Religion, briefly considered, in ten Discourses. By the Rev. John Dickson, A. M. Prof. Mor. Phil. in Charleston College. Charleston.

Discourses on Intemperance, preached in the Church in Brattle Square, Boston, in April, 1827. By John G. Palfrey, A. M. Boston. Nathan Hale. 18mo. pp. 111.

Unitarianism Vindicated from the Charge of not going far enough. Boston. Bowles & Dearborn. 12mo. pp. 24.

The Young Christian's Companion. By the Rev. G. P. Davis. Boston. Crocker & Brewster.

The Assistant to Family Religion. In Six Parts. By William Cogswell, A. M. Boston. Crocker & Brewster. 12mo. pp. 384.

A Discourse on the Good and Evil Principles of Human Nature, delivered in Scituate, February 18, 1827. By Samuel Dean. Boston. 8vo. pp. 16.

Pious Reflections for every Day in the Month. Translated from the French of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray. Providence. P. H. Burnton.

Two Discourses, designed to illustrate in some particulars the Original Use of the Epistles of the New Testament, compared with their Use and Application at the present day. By Rev. Orville Dewey. Boston. Printed by I. R. Butts & Co. 12mo. pp. 35.

Prize Essays of the Synod of Albany on the Institution of the Sabbath. By William Jay, Esq. and Rev. Samuel Nott, Jr.

A Scriptural View of Baptism. By Daniel Baker, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Washington city. Washington.

MISCELLANEOUS.

An Address, delivered before the Inhabitants of Stratford, July 4, 1827. By Edward Rutledge, Rector of Christ's Church. New-Haven. A. H. Maltby.

The Pestalozzian Primer, or First Step in Teaching Children the Art of Reading and Thinking. By John M. Keagy, M. D. 12mo. pp. 126. Harrisburg, 1827.

A System of Astronomy, on the Principles of Copernicus. By John Vose, A. M. Concord. J. B. Moore.

Nature Improved; or, a New Method of Teaching Languages, exemplified by its Application to Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. By Samuel Jackson, M. D. of Northumberland, Penn. Philadelphia. R. H. Small. 12mo.

Choice Pleasures of Youth, recommended in a Series of Letters from a Father to his Son. Philadelphia. Thomas S. Ash.

An Elementary Treatise on Astronomy, adapted to the present improved state of the science; being the Fourth Part of a Course of Natural Philosophy, compiled for the Use of the Students of the University at Cambridge, New England. By John Farrar, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. Boston. Hilliard, Gray, & Co. 8vo. pp. 420.

Lectures on Various Topics of Morals, Manners, Conduct, and Intellectual Improvement. By James M. Garnett. Richmond. Thomas W. White.

An Epitome of Grecian Antiquities for the Use of Schools. By Charles D. Cleaveland. Boston. Hilliard, Gray, & Co. 12mo. pp. 177.

An Enquiry into the Rule of Law, which creates a right to an Incorporal Hereditament, by an Adverse Enjoyment of Twenty Years. By Joseph K. Angell. Boston. Hilliard, Gray, & Co.

A Lenient System for Adjusting Demands and Collecting Debts without Imprisonment. By Benjamin Dearborn. Boston. J. H. Eastburn. 8vo. pp. 64.

An Introductory Lecture upon Criminal Jurisprudence, delivered in Rutgers's College, March 5, 1827. By J. D. Wheeler, Esq. Counsellor at Law. New-York.

A Treatise on General and Special Anatomy. By W. E. Horner. Philadelphia. Carey & Lea. 2 vols. 8vo.

A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Physic. By George Gregory, M. D. With Notes and Additions, adapted to the Practice of the United States, by Nathaniel Patten, M. D. and S. Colhoun, M. D. Philadelphia. 2 vols. 8vo.

American Journal of Foreign Medicine. Conducted by an Association of Physicians. No. I. Vol. I. Boston. Bowles & Dearborn. 8vo. pp. 48.

Essays devoted principally to the Discussion of the great Metaphysical Question of, how we acquire a Knowledge of External Objects. New-York. G. & C. Carvill.

Elements of Intellectual Philosophy, designed as a Text Book. By Thomas C. Upham. Portland. William Hyde. 8vo. pp. 504.

Account of the Visit of General Lafayette to the United States, from his arrival in August, 1824, to his Embarkation on board of the Brandywine Frigate, return to France, Reception, and Retirement to La Grange.

The House Servant's Directory, or a Monitor for the Use of Private Families. By Robert Roberts. Boston. Munroe & Francis.

The Inquirer for Truth. No. I. Vol. I. Canton, Ohio. 8vo. pp. 16.

American Herpetology, or Genera of North American Reptilia. With a

Synopsis of the Species. By Richard Harlan, M. D. Philadelphia.

A Plea for the West. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do for you, do even so for them.' Boston. Samuel H. Parker. 8vo. pp. 15.

The Western Quarterly Review. No. I. Cincinnati.

A Practical System of Rhetoric, or the Principles and Rules of Style, inferred from Examples of Writing. By Samuel P. Newman. Portland. William Hyde. 12mo. pp. 215.

Paley's Moral Philosophy, abridged, and adapted to the Constitution, Laws, and Usages of the United States. By B. Judd, A. M. New York. Collins & Hannay.

An Introduction to Systematic and Physiological Botany. By Thomas Nuttall, A. M. F. L. S. &c. Cambridge. Hilliard & Brown. 12mo. pp. 332.

A Poet's Leisure Hours. No. I. Waterford, N. Y. 12mo. pp. 70.

The Graves of the Indians, with other Poems. Boston. Hilliard, Gray, & Co. 18mo. pp. 72.

Our Chronicle of '26, a Satirical Poem. Boston. Wells & Lilly.

AMERICAN EDITIONS OF FOREIGN WORKS.

Prince Alexander of Hohenlohe's Prayer Book, or the Christian praying in the Spirit of the Catholic Church. Translated from the German. First American Edition.

Discourses on Various Subjects, by Robert South, D. D. selected from the complete English Edition. With a Sketch of his Life and Character. Boston. Bowles & Dearborn. 8vo. pp. 479.

The Pulpit Assistant, containing Three Hundred Outlines or Skeletons of Sermons, chiefly selected, from various Authors. With an Essay on the Composition of a Sermon. New York. J. & J. Harper. 3 vols. 18mo.

Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe. By J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi. Translated from the Original, with Notes, by Thomas Roscoe, Esq. New York. J. & J. Harper. 2 vols. 8vo.

The Golden Violet; with other Poems. By L. E. L. Philadelphia. Carey & Lea. 12mo.

Father Clement; a Tale for Children. By the Author of 'Anna Ross.'

MONTHLY RECORD.

RELIGIOUS.

Religious Reformation in Ireland.—

In a former number, we gave some account of a spirit that was beginning to work in the minds of this religiously enslaved people. The dissemination of Scriptural instruction, the distribution of the Scriptures and religious tracts, and the employment of itinerant readers of the Scriptures in the English and Irish languages, are the causes which, under the divine blessing, have mainly contributed to the important change of religious sentiment which is resulting in the conversion of considerable numbers from popery to protestantism, and in many, it is hoped, in the more important conversion from sin unto God.

A Society has been recently formed in London for the purpose of furthering this good work, entitled "The British Society for promoting the diffusion of

the Religious principles of the Reformation."

Its object, more specifically, is to enable clergymen and gentlemen engaged in promoting the reformation in Ireland, to avail themselves of the means afforded by existing institutions to such an extent as may be necessary to meet the local demand for the books and instruction which they dispense—to defray the expense of publications, and generally to assist individuals and associations in the diffusion of authentic information suited to the wants of their respective parishes and districts—and to adopt such modes of instruction as are best adapted to the condition of the lower orders of Roman Catholics in other parts of the empire.

Anniversaries in London.—The London Missionary Register, for May, contains the accounts of the anniversary

meetings of the various benevolent institutions of Great Britain, held in the months of April and May. From their

several Reports we abstract the following, which gives in a single view the amount of their operations for the past year.

	RECEIPTS.			PAYMENTS.			
Merchant Seamen's Bible Society,	£.	580	1 10	£.	523	7 3	
Language Institution, - -		608	5 6		618	13 6	
Irish Society - - -		760	7 6		749	14 0	
Wesleyan Missionary Society - -		45,360	19 2		45,350	17 2	
Church Missionary Society - -		43,297	8 6		40,470	3 6	
British and Foreign Bible Society -		80,240	1 2		69,962	11 11	
Prayer-Book and Homily Society -		1,827	9 10		1,960	4 8	
United Brethren - - - -		3,528	11 6		3,528	11 6	
Jews Society - - - -		14,457	18 0		15,050	12 11	
Hibernian Society - - - -		7,412	14 6		7,613	6 9	
British and Foreign School Society, -		1,879	9 8		2,158	18 2	
Port-of-London and Bethel-Union So.		895	3 4		799	4 1	
Sunday School Union - - -		4,695	15 5		4,140	4 8	
Naval and Military Bible Society -		5,369	7 11		5,438	13 8	
French and Spanish Translation So.		523	4 8		503	11 7	
London Missionary Society - -		35,331	0 6		43,957	9 1	
Religious Tract Society - - -		15,002	0 5		15,013	9 1	
Newfoundland School Society -		2,019	16 3		2,340	8 2	
Continental Society - - - -		1,876	6 11		2,203	5 3	
TOTAL,	£.	265,691	0 7	£.	262,453	7 9	
	OR, \$	1,180,849	05		\$	1,166,461	26

More Missionaries to the heathen.—

On the 21st of March last, Rev. F. G. Kayser and wife embarked, as Missionaries of the London Missionary Society, for the Cape of Good Hope; on the 26th, Rev. H. Nott and his companions for the Society Islands; on the 4th of April, Rev. J. J. Freeman and family, and Mr. and Mrs. Canham, for Madagascar; on the 10th, Rev. J. C. Thompson and wife, and Mr. W. B. Addis, for Quilon; Rev. W. Miller and wife, for Nagracoil, India; on the 11th, Rev. W. Reeve and family, and Rev. S. Dyer and wife, for Singapoore; Rev. R. Jennings and wife, for Chittoor; Rev. H. Crisp and wife, for Cudapah, and Miss Newell for Madras. In reference to these numerous departures the Directors say,

Perhaps at no period of the society's history, since the sailing of the ship Duff, have the Directors ever sent out so many laborers together: within a month, thirty-one persons, including families, have launched forth upon the deep, destined to far-distant shores. These numerous embarkations, while they have produced a very extensive outlay, evince the disposition of the Directors not to slacken their hands in the important cause which the society has embarked; but to go forward, relying on the co-operation of its nu-

merous friends, and above all, on the effectual blessing of Him who has said, *The silver and the gold are mine, and whose also is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory.* On behalf of this numerous band, we entreat the prayers of the members and friends of the society; that they may all arrive in safety, and be made lasting blessings to them who are now ready to perish.

On the 28th of May, the Committee of the Church Missionary Society dismissed the following Missionaries to their respective stations, viz. Rev. Thomas Davey and wife, on their return to the W. Africa Mission, Rev. C. L. Korck, M. D. for the Mediterranean, Rev. J. Latham and wife, for North India, Rev. P. P. Shaffter, for South India, and Miss Anna Maria Bailey, for New Zealand.—*Lond. Miss. Reg.*

Missions to Africa.—A letter from Basle, (Switzerland,) dated March 3d, says, Our Society will begin this spring, a mission to Western Africa, with six brethren, at two different places. One of these will be on the Gold Coast, in the colony of the king of Denmark: His Majesty readily gave permission for that purpose, and that even without any limitation, except the sole condition, that the missionaries

sent thither should understand the System of Mutual Instruction. The other station will be in the American Colony of Liberia, at Cape Mesurado, below Sierra Leone: our Committee received letters from thence, so very inviting and encouraging, to undertake a mission there, that they resolved to send thither three brethren—Messrs. Handt, Jessing, and Hegete; who will spend some months, if possible, in England, with Mr. Cunningham, in order to perfect their knowledge of the English language; and will depart next autumn for Liberia, to preach the salvation of Christ to those negroes who earnestly pray for teachers.—*Ib.*

A Christian church among the Arabs, Turks, and Persians.—The last Lutheran Intelligencer has the following paragraph, from the Monthly Magazine, published at Sleswig.

On the shores of the river Tigris, there exists a Christian church, the members of which call themselves Chaldeans, and trace their origin to the time of the apostles. It is supposed that they number 500,000 souls, all of whom are trained to arms, and whether at home or abroad, engaged in temporal matters or worshipping in church, they are never without arms, being constantly exposed to attacks from the Turks. Their patriarch is the first civil officer of the republic. The metropolis is called Iolemark, and is situated in the mountains, bounded by the river Zabab, which empties into the Tigris. During the winter season, about 12,000 persons reside in the city; but in the spring the number is much diminished, by the removal of many to the adjacent villages, for the purpose of cultivating the fields. The city is enclosed by a strong rampart, well mounted with cannon. But little is known of these people. The papists attempted to make an impression upon them some years ago, but failed, and that because of the Bible of which they had many manuscript copies. Since it has been discovered that these Bible Christians have no printing establishments among them, and no books, the British and Foreign Bible Society is making arrangements to provide them with printed copies of the Bible.

Mission Schools in Madagascar.—The Missionaries in Madagascar have presented a written language to the

people among whom they labour. They are, at present, zealously exerting themselves to introduce the knowledge of letters among its numerous population, chiefly with a view to their being rendered capable of reading the Scriptures, which have been translated into Madagasse, and will shortly be printed for their use. For this purpose they have established, in the centre of the island, with the sanction and under the patronage of the King, Radama, nearly thirty schools. The first was established at Tananarivou, in 1820; to this were afterwards added two other schools, which, with the former, were, in 1824, united into one, under the denomination of the Royal College (or central school.) The schools situated in the country are chiefly under the charge of teachers, selected from among the more intelligent native youths, who had previously been distinguished by their proficiency in the Royal College. A thirst for knowledge has been excited in a considerable portion of the rising generation. A public examination of the schools is annually held at Tananarivou, on which occasions the king usually presides, and enters with great interest into all the details of the meeting. The examination is chiefly in English, and Madagasse translations, writing, and arithmetic. The Missionaries state that the progress the children have made in the knowledge of the Christian religion, is truly gratifying. A society in aid of the schools has been established at Tananarivou by the Missionaries, with the sanction of the king, and several donations have been received from individuals resident in Tananarivou and at the Mauritius. A public library has been lately commenced at Tananarivou. The School Society and the library will lay the foundation of true religion, of improved civilization, of science, and of literature, in one of the largest islands of the world, containing a population of about four millions, and subject to a ruler, who appears desirous of promoting the civil improvement of his people.—*Ch. Obs.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

The City of London has 400 places of worship; 200 for Episcopalians, 66 for Independants, 36 for Wesleyan Methodists, 32 for Baptists, 30 for Calvinistic Methodists, 16 for Presbyterians.

(Scotch and Unitarian,) 14 for Roman Catholics, 6 for Quakers. The last census makes the number of inhabitants 1,274,800 souls. It is calculated that not more than 300,000 attend any place of worship, leaving 974,800, who neglect public worship altogether. To increase this criminal contempt for the Sabbath, there are supposed to be circulated on that sacred day, 45,000 copies of newspapers, two or 300,000 readers of which are probably in the city. The labour in this single article of publishing, must employ large numbers in the breach of the fourth commandment. A large aggregate of vice and crime is the consequence; and from the report of Mr. Wontner, the superintendent of Newgate, for 1826, it appears that 2931 persons were committed to prison for breach of laws in 12 months. Males under 21, 1227; over 21, 1096. Females under 21, 442; over 21, 166. What an alarming view is this of a city, supposed to be in "the very meridian of Christian illumination, and in the centre and heart of British civilization, liberty and prosperity! May not London be called a mine of heathenism, and profligacy?"

A war has broke out between the Mexican Government and the Camanche tribe of Indians; and the Mexicans are taking measures to prevent their communication with the Indians of the U. States, by posting bodies of troops along the Sabine river.

Disturbances in Spain.—From the details given in foreign papers it appears that this country is in a state of constant religious as well as political excitement. A private letter dated Madrid, May 24th, says, the Archbishop Toledo has just published in his diocese an order for the repressing of all books, except prayer books. Every work in a foreign language, every translation from foreign languages and the French and English Journals, in a body, are forbidden by his Eminence. He also forbids all persons, under pain of excommunication, to enter the Reading Rooms which have lately been established, and also the reading of the works of M. Lorente, of those of Samper on the Revenues of the Church of Spain, and the translation of the Psalms of David, which were published last year, and dedicated to the king.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS.

June 6.—REV. JOHN GOLDSBURY, over the Second Congregational church in North Bridgewater, Mass. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Hamilton of Taunton.

June 7.—REV. JAMES McEWEN, as Colleague Pastor of the Congregational church in Bridgeport, Vt. Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Bates, of Middlebury College.

June 8.—REV. HENRY DAVIS, at Bridgewater, Oneida Co. N. Y. as an Evangelist. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Bennett.

June 20.—REV. WILLIAM J. WILCOX, over the Presbyterian church at Cold-Spring, Cattaraugus County, N. Y. Sermon by the Rev. Miles P. Squier of Geneva.

June 21.—REV. JOEL PAKER, over the third Presbyterian church in Rochester, N. Y.

June 21.—REV. CHARLES WHITEHEAD, over the Presbyterian church

in Batavia, N. Y. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Eddy, of Canandaigua.

June 27.—REV. NATHANIEL GAGE, over the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Dunstable, N. H. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Gannett of Boston.

June 28.—REV. WAKEMAN G. JOHNSON, over the Baptist church in Pittsford, Vt. Sermon by Elder S. C. Dellaway.

July 3.—REV. BENJAMIN N. HARRIS, over the Baptist church in Leicester, Mass. Sermon by the Rev. Jonathan Going, of Worcester.

July 11.—REV. BARNES SEARS, over the Baptist church in Hartford. Sermon by the Rev. Daniel Sharp, of Boston.

July 18.—REV. GEORGE C. BECKWITH, over the First Congregational Society, in Lowell, Mass. Sermon by Dr. Porter, of Andover.